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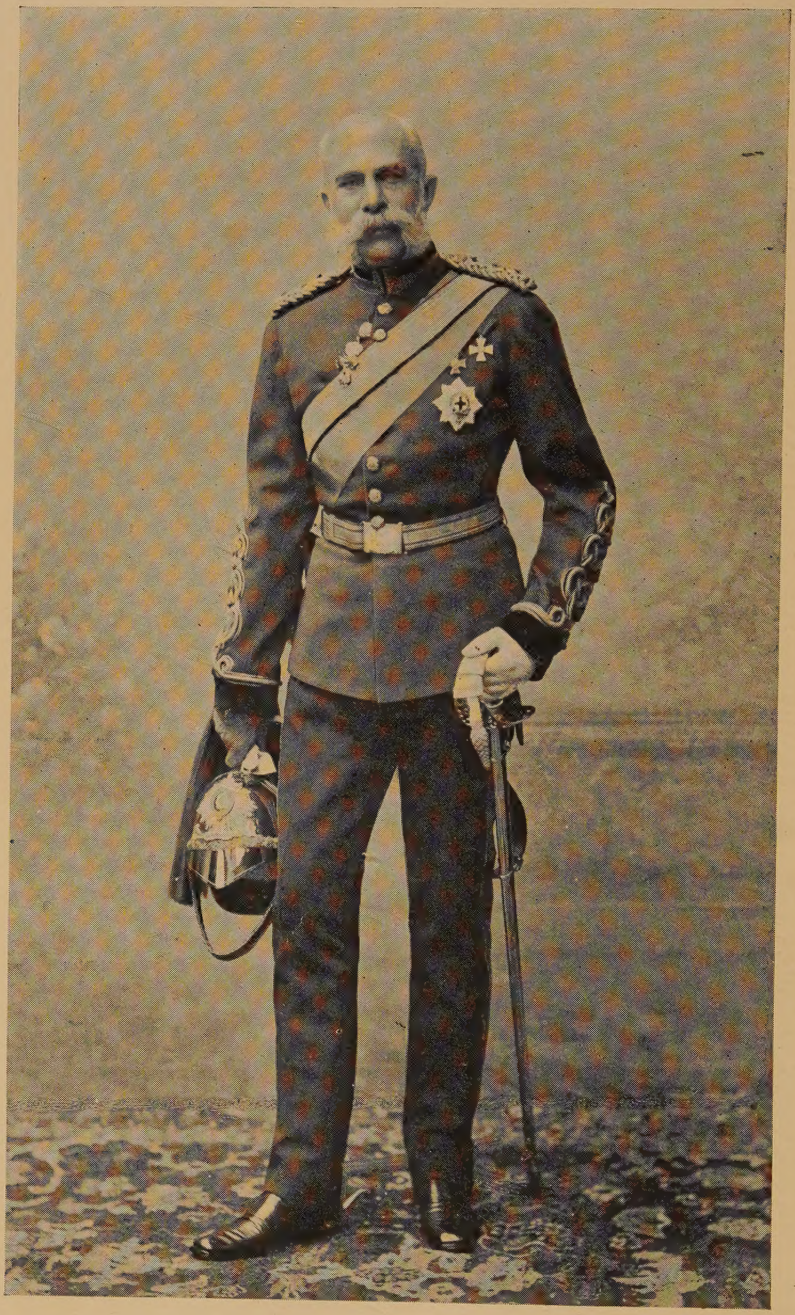
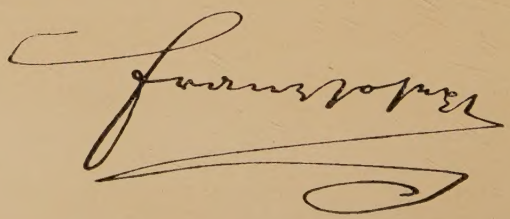
The Emperor Francis Joseph
and His Times





Frontispiece]

The Emperor Francis Joseph and His Times

By Lieutenant-General Baron von Margutti, C.V.O.

(Attached to the Aides-de-Camp's Department of the Imperial Household, 1900-1917)

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TO MISS ALICE S. TOLLEMACHE,

OF LAYSTON HOUSE, BUNTINGFORD, HERTS,

WHO, IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE WAR,

EXTENDED IN TRUE FRIENDSHIP HER HELPFUL HANDS

TO MY FAMILY, TRYING IN EVERY WAY

TO LESSEN THE HARDSHIPS OF OUR PRESENT EXISTENCE,

I DEDICATE THE FOLLOWING PAGES OF

THIS ENGLISH EDITION OF MY PERSONAL MEMORIES

IN NEVER-FAILING THANKFULNESS AND DEVOTION.

ALBERT BARON VON MARGUTTI, C.V.O.

Trieste, August 25th, 1921.

48167

PREFACE

Cadono le Citta,
Cadono i regni,
E l' uomo, che de cader
Par che si sdegni. . . .

THE great and powerful State whose citizens we once were has ceased to exist. With it vanished the venerable House which had reigned over it for six and a half centuries.

Memories alone are left to us. They rise from the grave like those of our dead, and first among them the memory of him who from his post of supreme authority gave the vanished epoch its particular character for two generations—Francis Joseph I., Emperor of Austria and Apostolic King of Hungary.

Now is the time, among the unceasing difficulties and the endless trials of our daily life, that he seems to draw nearer to us, perhaps because Death, which reveals all things, is lifting the veil from him too, or because he comes before us as one of the most tragic figures of the old Austria.

He ascended the throne of his fathers when the confusion of the stormy years 1848 and 1849 was at its height, and he bade this earth farewell when the far more momentous events of the greatest and most fateful struggle that the world has ever seen kept us in breathless suspense. Between those two periods lie nearly seventy years, years filled with tragedies for the dynasty, political dissensions of every kind which kept the nations and countries of the Empire in a state of continuous convulsion and unsuccessful wars.

Yet notwithstanding all the blows of fate this sovereign

stood firm and undaunted at the helm of State throughout this long period. From earliest youth to extreme old age he never allowed the reins of his inherited dominion to slip from his grasp. History will surely show whether he ruled his people well and effectively, whether he always proved equal to the demands made upon him, and whether he could have achieved more in the way of mastering his tasks, or could and should have had a clearer realization of them.

The search for the true answer to these questions will probably keep the world busy for generations. It is not yet time for a contemporary, working within a limited scope, to venture upon so fundamental an exploration.

Immediately after the death of Francis Joseph, the atavistic, artificial bonds of the nationalities over which the old Emperor ruled along traditional lines were torn asunder. Though he observed those principles with tireless zeal and the greatest loyalty to established custom the aged monarch never *consciously* disregarded the growing demands of the times. Such is the ultimate explanation of the fact that so long as he sat on the throne a system which was probably already out of date proved itself—whatever critics may say —effective and at any rate workable. In any case, during this period there were no such cracks in the structure of the State as were likely to bring about a direct collapse.

It was two years after Francis Joseph's death that the climax came with the break-up of the Hapsburg states. Yet the time is so short that no doubt the charge of inefficiency is bound to be levelled at the rule of the old monarch as well.

In days to come, expert inquiry will show how far the mistakes and omissions which brought about the collapse of the Danube Monarchy are to be traced to the work of Francis Joseph himself. With a view to assisting judgment in these matters it will not be out of place to have a character sketch of this sovereign which is based upon direct personal impressions.

I propose, therefore, to sketch out a personal portrait, making full use of my own observations and impressions during my seventeen years' service in the Aides-de-Camp's Department, and of the material in the shape of evidence, comments and information I have been able to gather from other *absolutely unimpeachable sources*. In broad, bold outline these reminiscences will illustrate the character and activities of the Emperor Francis Joseph in his old age, that is during the opening years of the century and the world crisis which is with us still.

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THE EMPEROR FRANCIS JOSEPH AND HIS TIMES

CHAPTER I

FRANCIS JOSEPH'S CAREER

MY personal recollections of the Emperor Francis Joseph date from the time when I was appointed one of his Aides-de-camp, and thus cover the period from the opening of the century to the Monarch's death. This decade and a half, 1900 to 1916, represents his last years. He was thus an old man when I first knew him.

To judge both him and his work in this period objectively it must always be borne in mind that Francis Joseph attained the age of more than eighty-six years, and that for nearly sixty-eight of them he sat on the throne and directed the destinies of the Hapsburg Empire. Hardly any other sovereign has enjoyed so long a period of effective rule. Two generations, with all their changes, their progressive developments and discoveries, their ceaseless evolution in the intellectual and technical spheres, passed before his eyes.

Let us glance back for a moment at the year 1848 in which Francis Joseph began his reign. Remember the patriarchal, primitive arrangements of public and private life which then obtained—the railways scarcely out of their cradle, the couriers and post-riders, coaches and omnibuses as the ordinary means of transport, sailing-ships and rowing boats, workers organized in guilds, forced labour, serfdom, which still existed

to a large extent, and last, but not least, absolute autocracy. Compare these conditions with those of 1916, in which railways, steamers, aircraft, the motor industry, telegraphs, telephones, electricity, gas, photography, huge factories and industrial establishments and all the other phenomena which owe their existence to the discoveries of modern times have attained the highest degree of perfection. Nor must we forget universal suffrage, which has set a crown upon the head of the modern passion for freedom. We see at once that the world at the end of this period of nearly seventy years bore a totally and fundamentally different complexion from that with which it opened.

Francis Joseph had to share in these colossal changes which had the most far-reaching effects on the framework of his states and the lives of each of their citizens.

It is necessary to keep these unprecedented developments, or at any rate their predominant features, before our eyes when we attempt to judge the life and work of the old Emperor with understanding and without prejudice. Much in his character, as revealed to us after the century opened, is explained by the long and eventful development of his personality, and more particularly by the effect of certain experiences which gave the old monarch his particular individuality.

Francis Joseph, the eldest son of the Archduke Francis Charles and the Archduchess Sophie, daughter of King Maximilian Joseph of Bavaria, was born at Schönbrunn on August 18, 1830. His childhood thus falls in the reign of his grandfather, the Emperor Francis I., and his early youth in that of his uncle, the Emperor Ferdinand I., so that both stages form part of that period of general political stagnation —so averse to any and every form of change—during which the Chancellor, Prince Metternich, was all-powerful and governed the Hapsburg States in accordance with the re-

actionary, and in many respects foolish, principles of the Holy Alliance.

The Archduke Francis Charles—Francis Joseph's father—was, like his elder brother, a nonentity who is best described by the adjective "the Good," which history has actually conferred on Ferdinand, but which is really a *pis aller*. Very different was his wife, the Archduchess Sophie, a gifted, well-educated, self-assertive, extraordinarily ambitious and imperious woman. To her preponderating influence Francis Joseph owed the fact that he was given a very careful and what was then considered an uncommonly varied education. Special importance was attached to a thorough knowledge of languages; so much so that Francis Joseph could not only speak and write in German, Italian, Hungarian and French, but also had a respectable knowledge of Czech, Polish and Croatian which was of equal value to him later on.

The young Archduke also travelled a good deal in his early years, particularly in Italy. That he really endeavoured to gather impressions from his travels is proved by the drawings and sketches he made during his residence in various towns. I have seen several of these and they show technical skill, and more particularly a lively comprehension which reveals what a careful and close observer Francis Joseph must even then have been.

I need hardly say that a suitable military education for the young Archduke was not forgotten. After certain theoretical studies (which were then on very narrow and purely formal lines) we see him learning practical soldiering, again mainly in Italy. On May 6, 1848, he received his baptism of fire by the aged Field-Marshal Radetzky's side in the action at Santa Lucia.

It was not long after this that any further systematic education had to be abandoned, as Francis Joseph, barely eighteen years old, suddenly found himself a leading figure on the stage of world-history.

In 1848 the venerable Austrian monarchy was caught by the fever of revolution and shaken to the very heart. In a few days the nations of the Empire, which had only just become conscious of having attained their political majority, destroyed the worm-eaten patriarchal system of Metternich and all its irksome shackles. The Emperor Ferdinand I. succumbed to the new order after feeble and unskilful efforts to walk in new paths. On December 2, 1848, he abdicated at Olmütz in favour of his eldest nephew, the Archduke Francis Joseph, who had been declared of full age the day before. His father, the Archduke Francis Charles, had renounced the succession.

It was a melancholy inheritance upon which the Emperor Francis Joseph, suddenly placed upon Europe's oldest throne, now entered. The flames of revolution raged on all sides. The foundations of order had first to be laid before the work of reconstruction could begin.

Francis Joseph addressed himself conscientiously to this difficult and important preliminary task, and he was well supported by a Ministry newly constituted by Prince Felix Schwarzenberg in which energetic men like Stadium, Bach and Bruch took the lead.

In May, 1849, the young Emperor went to Hungary which was still in revolt. He had been preceded by Prince Windischgrätz with a force of reliable and tried troops.

Then he hastened to Warsaw to meet the Emperor Nicholas I. of Russia, who at Francis Joseph's request had ordered an army to be sent to Hungary to overthrow the rebels Kossuth and Görgey. The former fled to Turkey and Görgey capitulated at Vilagos on August 13, 1849.

In the previous March Radetzky, by his victories at Mortara and Novara, had compelled King Charles Albert of Sardinia to abdicate, and thus restored Austrian supremacy in Lombardy and Venetia. Thus by the close of this year

the Emperor Francis Joseph was in a position to secure his authority in all the lands bequeathed to him by his ancestors.

The year 1848, again, saw the end of the attempt among the German states to form a confederation under the leadership of Prussia, and the influence of Austria once more became predominant in Germany. In the Italian Peninsula also the hegemony of Austria seemed to be re-established by the restoration of all the old principalities.

The storm, which had darkened the whole sky, had passed over sooner than could originally have been hoped, and Francis Joseph found himself in the fortunate position of being able to take firm hold of the reins of government under favourable and promising auspices. Moreover his accession was preceded by a valuable rumour that he was minded to govern constitutionally and honestly intended to make full use of all that the new age offered.

It cannot be denied that in contrast to these expectations was the fact that on March 4, 1849, the Emperor decreed the dissolution of the Vienna Reichstag which had been summoned to Kremsier in Moravia for further conferences on the constitution. An even greater contrast was the withdrawal of the constitution for the whole Empire, as well as Hungary, which Francis Joseph had announced on his own authority. From these measures it can be seen that the forces of reaction—already lurking in the background—were beginning to gain influence over the young ruler. Before long they raised their head openly and were able to do so all the more effectively because they had the support of the favourable, though unforeseen, turn of events and the hyper-conservative opinions of the Emperor's mother, the Archduchess Sophie, and Count Grünne, his Aide-de-camp and principal adviser. As a matter of fact the monarch, as yet inexperienced and unaccustomed to direct touch with the representatives of his peoples, succumbed only too soon to the

promptings of these two and their following. It is regrettable to find him, after hastily annulling the ancient national constitutions, abolishing the constitution of the Empire on August 20, 1851, and in January, 1852, restoring autocratic government, the reins of which he took more or less exclusively into his own hands after the death of Prince Felix Schwarzenberg in April, 1852.

Here was a sinister beginning, for the young Emperor surrounded himself with irresponsible men of no, or few, intellectual attainments who were at his but not the people's service. He was soon entirely at the mercy of their whisperings, selfish intrigues and—by no means least—their hopeless irresponsibility. It is hardly surprising that what followed was a never-ending series of blunders in Austrian domestic politics, blunders which unfortunately run through Francis Joseph's reign like a scarlet thread, notwithstanding the Emperor's goodwill, which none can doubt, or the purity of his motives. The decisions of 1851 and 1852 meant that from the very start his rule was stamped with the ominous impression that the Emperor did not realize the spirit of the times and was therefore incompetent to lead his peoples in that spirit.

Strictly speaking such a conclusion does less than justice to the Emperor Francis Joseph. He was convinced that it was in the best interests of his subjects that the burden of making laws and ordinances should rest upon his shoulders alone. At that time, perhaps, Francis Joseph did not know that the voice of the nation should be heard, and the men around him took good care to keep him in ignorance, for fear of "encroachments on the sovereign's powers," so they said; but surely their main motive was merely to preserve their own influence unimpaired.

It was during this period of splendid autocracy—though the splendour was purely fictitious—that on April 24, 1854, the young Emperor offered his hand in marriage at Vienna

to the Duchess Elizabeth of Bavaria,* a surpassing beauty. One son† and three daughters‡ were born of the marriage.

The marriage upon which Francis Joseph entered was a real love-match and it was concluded under the most promising auspices. Unfortunately, it never proved itself that source of unsullied domestic bliss that might have been expected.

The same year, 1854, also witnessed the adoption of that foreign policy which likewise led only to disaster, a result which unfortunately was destined to be characteristic of the era of Francis Joseph. The Crimean War broke out. England and France, subsequently supported by Sardinia, entered into an alliance with Turkey against Russia which had declared war on the latter.

The Czar Nicholas now expected that Francis Joseph, mindful of the decisive help he had given him against Hungary only a short time before, would take part in the struggle as his ally. At that time the conduct of foreign affairs was in the hands of the incapable Count Buol who vacillated in the most unpardonable fashion at this critical juncture. As far as appearances went he inclined neither to Russia nor the Western Powers. Trying to sit on two stools, he fell between them. His decisions culminated in a temporary occupation of Wallachia, the cost of which threw the finances of the Danube Monarchy—unstable enough in any case—into hopeless confusion. The other result was that not only Russia, but England and France also were permanently incensed against Austria. When the Czar Nicholas died in 1855 and his successor, Alexander II., made peace at Paris

* Daughter of Duke Max of Bavaria, born at Munich on December 24, 1837. Assassinated at Geneva on September 10, 1898.

† The Crown Prince, Archduke Rudolph, born at Laxenburg on August 21, 1858. Died at Mayerling on January 30, 1889.

‡ Sophie, born at Vienna on March 5, 1855; died on May 29, 1857. Gisela, born at Laxenburg on July 12, 1856. Marie Valerie, born at Budapest on April 22, 1868.

on March 30, 1856, after Russia's disastrous war, Austria offered the anything but elevating spectacle of complete political isolation. This was all the more disastrous as even in the German Federation sympathy for Francis Joseph's autocratic government had diminished to a marked degree.

The result was that Austria was left entirely to her own resources three years later when she was called upon to defend her historic possessions in Upper Italy which the young King of Sardinia, Victor Emmanuel II., prepared to attack in alliance with France, his aim being to realize his war-cry of the Unification of Italy, a war-cry which met with an enthusiastic echo over the whole of the peninsula. It was then seen that not only Francis Joseph's political advisers but even his military colleagues were anything but equal to their task. The aged Radetzky had been gathered to his fathers a few months before and not one of the court generals who surrounded the Emperor was in the slightest degree competent to take the dead leader's place. On June 24, 1859, the main Austrian army, at the head of which was Francis Joseph himself, suffered a decisive defeat at Solferino.

The young Emperor's self-confidence, which had grown much more obstinate in the atmosphere of absolute autocracy, at once began to waver. His nerves failed. Without stopping to reflect, he clasped the hand of reconciliation which the Emperor Napoleon III., who had likewise taken personal command of the French army, immediately offered at Villafranca. This was possibly a great mistake, as the French Emperor, whose army had already suffered the heaviest losses, might easily have found himself in a dangerous and perhaps even catastrophic position if the Austrians had offered further resistance. But Francis Joseph now thought only of peace. The continuation of hostilities seemed to him to involve too much risk. By the Treaty of Zürich he ceded Lombardy which had been promised to Victor Emmanuel II. The latter displayed masterly skill in uniting

under his sceptre the whole of Italy, with the exception of Venice and Rome, during the next two years.

The Treaty of Zürich seemed to mark the end of Austria's supremacy in Italy. The final solution of this great political problem showed Francis Joseph coming off a hopeless second-best. Austria's star had begun to sink.

The Emperor Francis Joseph never recovered from this heavy blow. There was much heart-searching and in the hour of disillusionment he realized that the absolutist system he had reintroduced in 1852 was no longer practicable because the strength of the monarchy was being sapped, and sooner or later the Empire was bound to prove incapable of any effort at home or abroad. In this chastened frame of mind Francis Joseph laudably declined to stand on his own dignity and proceeded to strike out new paths. He again summoned the Reichsrat, and on October 20 granted the constitution known as the "Oktoberdiplom," placed Schmerling at the head of the Government, and on February 26, 1861, sanctioned that constitution which brought even Austria into the ranks of states with a modern form of government. It is quite true that this constitution, the "Februarpatent" did not entirely meet the wishes of the peoples of the Danube Monarchy. Hungary, which was struggling for complete independence, was hostile to it and even the Slavs were in no way satisfied since their ideal, a federal constitution for the Empire, was ever before their eyes.

Francis Joseph had, none the less, changed the constitution of his states in conformity with the demands of modern progress, a change which recovered sympathy for Austria, particularly in the German Federation. The result was that the proposal put forward by him in 1863 for a reconstitution of that Confederation under Austrian supremacy met with a highly favourable reception from all the secondary states and even most of the small states of Germany. The importance of this was all the greater because the Emperor

was doubly anxious to realize his aspirations with regard to Germany now that his ambition of Austrian predominance in Italy had suffered shipwreck.

A diet was convened at Frankfort-am-Main in August, 1863, to consider this reform but it ended with a serious rebuff for the Austrian Emperor, as King William I., who had been on the throne of Prussia since 1861, obstinately refused to take any part in the Congress and declined to do anything more than agree to take common action with Austria in the Schleswig-Holstein question which had become acute at that moment.

The situation was that Christian IX. of Glücksburg, in accordance with the terms of the second London Protocol, had entered upon the government of the unified Danish state and, by decreeing a constitution applicable to the whole of this state, sanctioned the incorporation into Greater Denmark of Schleswig and Holstein which had previously been members of the German Confederation. Austria and Prussia objected, made war on Denmark in 1864, and ultimately compelled her to cede the Elbe duchies.

These immediately became a fatal apple of discord between the victors, and all the more so because there were other causes of friction between Prussia—governed constitutionally, it is true, but firmly and far-sightedly by William I. and his Minister-President, Bismarck—and Austria the structure of which was not firmly welded together and into which the February constitution would not completely fit. The Magyars and Slavs attacked it so vehemently that in 1865 its author, Schmerling, resigned and his successor, Belcredi, withdrew it.

Belcredi's attempted solution of the Schleswig-Holstein question by the Gastein Convention of August 14, 1865, also led to no result, as Prussia meant to clear up this question at the same time that she settled the issue of the hegemony of Germany.

William I. had reorganized his army in exemplary fashion. He knew that in any case he could rely on the help of King Victor Emmanuel II. (who was intent on the conquest of Venetia by fair means or foul) and had no reason to fear a conflict with Austria.

In April, 1866, he therefore issued through Bismarck a proposal that a Pan-German parliament should be convened. This action necessarily meant war and speedy war. Austria and the secondary German states allied with her found themselves attacked by Prussia and Italy.

In this conflict Italy had nothing but defeats to show on land and sea (Custozza on June 24, 1866, and Lissa on July 20), but at the end of June Prussia gained important successes in Bohemia and these were crowned on July 3, 1866, by the great and decisive victory over the Austrians at Königgrätz. King Wilhelm I. led his army in person. The Emperor Francis Joseph, mindful of the unhappy day of Solferino, and subordinating his personal actions too much to political considerations, kept away from his troops.

On July 22 Austria abandoned further resistance and on August 23 concluded the Peace of Prague with Prussia. It was followed by the Peace of Vienna with Italy on October 3, 1866. Austria thus went out of the German Confederation for ever and ceded Venetia to the Emperor Napoleon III. who had already given it to the King of Italy.

By the conclusion of these treaties Francis Joseph saw himself fully and finally robbed of supremacy both in Germany and Italy. The great and glowing dreams of his youth, the mighty and ambitious plans which had inspired him for the last decade, had ended in smoke.

The only course open to Francis Joseph was that which Prince Gortschakoff, then head of the Czar's government, expressed clearly and tersely in the historic phrase, "Russia concentrates."

Undivided attention was now devoted to affairs at

home with a view to a permanent settlement at the earliest possible moment. With that in mind Baron von Beust, who had left the Saxon for the Austrian service and become the confidential adviser of the sorely-tried Emperor, recommended the complete pacification of Hungary. In conformity with his advice the lands of St. Stephen were separated from the federation. Francis Joseph had himself crowned at Budapest on June 8, 1867, as King of Hungary, and the Hapsburg Empire immediately emerged as the "Austro-Hungarian Monarchy," to meet a mere fifty-year, but all the more stormy future.

At the same time, in Austria legal recognition was given to the February Constitution of 1861 which had been supplemented by decrees issued in 1867, and in Hungary to the original constitution which had been modified by the laws of 1848.

The Emperor Francis Joseph now showed a praiseworthy readiness to abandon some of his personal prerogatives and hereditary privileges so that he could follow the trend of modern tendencies and co-operate with his subjects in securing the future welfare of the State. For him the year 1867 thus marked a decisive turning point. He was definitely breaking with the past and its unhappy experiments at home and abroad and adopting a new political orientation for the days to come, days to which the past twenty years with their more than bitter experiences should be but a prelude.

The passing of the old era was marked by a very sad event in the Emperor's own family. His eldest brother, the Archduke Ferdinand Max, who had set forth in high hopes to place the elusive crown of Mexico upon his head as the Emperor Maximilian I., met with a tragic fate after all his efforts had ended in disaster. On June 19, 1867, he was shot on the plain of Queretaro by the orders of President Benito Juarez. What a blow this tragic end must have been to the Emperor Francis Joseph, to whom his House

always came first! What must the Archduchess Sophie have suffered! She already considered herself mother of two Emperors and might perhaps have been mother of a king as well if the events of 1863 had placed her third child, the Archduke Charles Louis, on the throne of Poland.

The period of trials and disappointments from 1848 to 1867 confirmed the Emperor, who was now in the prime of life, in his fundamental resolve to give his peoples the blessings of peace, cost what it might, to renounce expansion and the outward glitter of glory by repudiating any idea of *revanche* and to seek and find the welfare of his Empire only in its healthy and progressive internal development.

His attitude in the year 1870 showed that the Emperor meant these professions honestly. During the mighty Franco-German conflict the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy preserved an unwavering neutrality. Francis Joseph vigorously repudiated all the French invitations to a "Revenge for Sadowa," and unreservedly recognized the glorious creation of the new German Empire in 1871. This act of renunciation was all the more to his credit because the success which the Hohenzollerns had now achieved had once been the Emperor Francis Joseph's holiest and fondest dream.

In 1873 Francis Joseph also marked his final renunciation of his Italian ambitions by a visit he paid to King Emmanuel II. in Venice—an Austrian town but a short while before. These very wise excursions into the realm of reality soon bore promising fruit. The Danube Monarchy made considerable economic and cultural progress and that in turn opened the door to the East, its proper and natural field of activity.

It was thus under the most hopeful auspices that in 1873 the Emperor celebrated his twenty-five years jubilee.

As the Russo-Turkish war of 1877 and 1878 was not brought to any final conclusion by the preliminary peace of San Stefano, the representatives of the European Powers assembled in the Berlin Congress at which Count Andrassy, the Austro-

Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs, succeeded in obtaining for the Danube Monarchy a mandate for the occupation of the Turkish provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thus not only did Dalmatia secure the hinterland which she so urgently required and had had to go without, but Croatia and Slavonia also obtained an indispensable rampart. It was along these lines that the way to Salonica should have been opened to the Hapsburg Empire and if the project had materialized Austria-Hungary would have obtained *ipso facto* the hegemony of the western East.

This success also meant a happy memory for Francis Joseph personally. He had added to his Empire in the south-east.

Unfortunately the promise was not destined to be fulfilled for at home the worms were already remorselessly busy on the beams of the Hapsburg structure. It was seen that the dualistic system which had been introduced for the Danube Monarchy in 1867 was nothing but an *ad hoc* and highly imperfect solution which entirely accounted for the weakness of the whole State. West of the Leitha the Germans ought to have preserved their ascendancy. They possessed no political machinery for doing so, however, and their cultural superiority in no way enabled them to counterbalance the growing numerical superiority of the Slavs in the north and south to even a slight degree. On the other side of the Leitha the Magyars were doing everything in their power to impose a Hungarian hegemony, although by the test of numbers they too were quite unequal to the Slavs and Rumanians who shared the land with them. Yet they were only superficially successful in their efforts because all they really did was to get themselves hated by the other nationalities and make bitter enemies of their blood relations beyond the frontiers. The result of the nationalist conflicts which arose out of the Constitution and indeed were its first fruits was a government on the basis of incessant com-

promises and temporizations, a state of affairs which a man of the experience and efficiency of Francis Joseph could have coped with to some extent, at any rate at home, but on which the foreign relations of the Monarchy were bound to have a decidedly growing and paralysing effect. That is why the troops of the Emperor Francis Joseph never entered Salonica, his fleet was never mistress of its waters and the trade of Austria-Hungary had to rest content with its poor and ancient markets. So much so that before long she could scarcely hold her own with the resolute rivalry of her neighbours in the north-west and south-west who were putting forth mighty efforts.

Even the Bosnian occupation proved itself nothing more than a temporary expedient. It involved the Danube Monarchy in huge financial burdens for which no compensation was obtainable in the shape of economic advantages or opportunities for expansion. It imposed on Austria-Hungary the most thankless civilizing work in destitute regions and eventually became the direct cause of the ghastly world-struggle which suddenly hurled the Hapsburg Empire to its doom.

Of course the alliance with Germany, which was concluded in 1878 and effected such improvement as was possible in the unfavourable situation in which the year 1866 had left the Germans of Austria, certainly brightened the Empire's prospects for the future. Three years later by the adhesion of Italy the Alliance was converted into that bulwark of peace which, so long as the "Triple Alliance" existed, was the key to the subsequent policy of the Danube Monarchy. Yet the internal disintregation of the Monarchy was beginning to be obvious even as early as the eighties. Count Taaffe, the Austrian Minister-President of unholy memory, could think of nothing better than opportunism and playing off the many nationalities of the western half of the Empire against each other, so that they could never settle down.

Simultaneously the Magyars introduced an agrarian terrorism which can only be described as narrow and short-sighted and added to this folly by virtually hermetically sealing the Monarchy against the economic areas in the Balkans. These selfish measures not only resulted in a general and steady increase in the cost of living in Austria but aroused terrible hatred among the people of Serbia and Rumania whose brothers in Hungary were already suffering severely under a systematic oppression. All this was ultimately pregnant with the most terrible consequences for Francis Joseph's Empire.

The Emperor recognized these evil tendencies too late. He then endeavoured, at endless pains to himself, to control them but unfortunately found neither the right men nor the right machinery to deal with the situation. The result was that at the eleventh hour everything, even the smallest details, came to him for decision. There was hardly a day which did not bring him all kinds of complaints, grievances and annoyances. Unconsciously he began to feel himself harassed on all sides and in this frame of mind he often came to decisions which were not the result of mature consideration. Things constantly went wrong and then his temperament prevented him from taking time to set them right quietly and with due deliberation. He was a tireless worker, but it was just in big questions that he became a mere opportunist. In the end he lived from hand to mouth, so to speak, in such matters.

On the other hand the sovereign began to busy himself mainly with details, even of the most trivial description, so as to avoid becoming involved in the perplexities of vital state problems and getting no further. It was hardly surprising that foolish experiments were continually being made. The Emperor often impatiently attacked some matter or other only to let it drop again in a very short time. It was characteristic of his whole temperament that he did not

possess that searching gaze which clearly sees the great in the small and the whole in the part and then puts the knowledge thereby gained to practical purpose. In this phase of his life Francis Joseph was confronted with abrupt changes which were naturally bound to result in serious mistakes.

On the top of all these mischiefs the deplorable eastern policy pursued by the Monarchy led, owing to a miscalculation in connection with the Serbo-Bulgarian war of 1885, to a further increase in the tension with Russia which almost led to war in 1887 and prevented any better understanding between the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Governments. To the tension in this quarter was added the deep-rooted antagonism between France and Germany which had been latent since 1871 so that for the future the European horizon was darkened with heavy thunder-clouds.

On December 2, 1888, the Emperor held his forty years' jubilee which was commemorated by truly eloquent proofs of the affectionate loyalty of his subjects. But even this joyful occasion was followed only too soon by a frightful blow—the death by violence of the Emperor's only son, the Crown Prince Rudolph, who met a premature end at Mayerling, near Heiligenkreuz, on January 30, 1889. This tragedy was a blow not merely at the Emperor and his family but at all the peoples of the Danube Monarchy. For to all the other difficulties with which they were confronted was added a measure of uncertainty in the succession, now in the direct line no longer though in accordance with the constitution the Emperor's second brother, the Archduke Charles Louis, was available and when he died on May 19, 1896, his eldest son Francis Ferdinand, born December 18, 1863, and still unmarried. The Crown Prince Rudolph, who had been married on May 10, 1881, to Princess Stephanie of Belgium, left only a daughter, Elizabeth.

It was obvious that the Crown Prince Rudolph's shocking death had cast a gloom over the Emperor Francis Joseph

for the rest of his days. The effect was intensified by the fact that the Empress Elizabeth also had been utterly prostrated by this blow, and never succeeded in reconciling herself to spending the rest of her days as a devoted and self-sacrificing companion to her husband and sovereign. She hoped to find distraction if not relief from her sorrow in continuous foreign travel, in the course of which she fell a victim to a murderous attack by an anarchist at Geneva on September 10, 1898.

Thus robbed of his two nearest and dearest by violent death, the Emperor henceforth found untiring and exhausting work his last resource. He became wholly absorbed in the "official duties" which claimed his attention all day and every day from early morning to late at night. He allowed himself no sort of rest, not even an hour or two for recreation.

Of course Francis Joseph, left in his desolate home, bereft of its châtelaine and heir, found comfort and consolation in the tender affection of the two daughters still left to him. The elder, Gisela, wife of Prince Leopold of Bavaria since April 20, 1873, and the younger, Marie Valerie, married to the Archduke Franz Salvator, of the Tuscan line of the imperial house, had created a delightful family circle in which the Emperor was always entirely at home. He was particularly happy in the company of the many sons and daughters of the Archduchess Marie Valerie, the special favourite of the Empress Elizabeth, whom he often had to stay with him, especially in summer. She helped him to forget the tragedies of his life, at least for a few hours.

When, on December 2, 1898, the time came for Francis Joseph to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of his accession, he was far too stricken by the unspeakably tragic impressions of the Empress's unexpected death. A horribly cruel fate made this occasion, which in other circumstances would have been a time of rejoicing, incredibly bitter to the sorely-

tried man. It was the same with August 18, 1900, Francis Joseph's seventieth birthday, which was celebrated joyously throughout the whole monarchy. It found the Emperor in a sore and depressed mood owing to the marriage, on July 1, 1900, of the heir, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, to Countess Sophie Chotek, an ex-Maid of Honour to the Archduchess Isabella, wife of the Archduke Frederick.

His attitude was comprehensible, for Francis Joseph considered himself the chosen guardian of the fame and reputation of his House—a house which had claimed and occupied the first place in Europe for more than six hundred years. How hard must it have been for the sovereign, worn out by the blows of fate, to give his consent to the heir's morganatic marriage! How often in later years has he been sorrowfully reproached for allowing his consent to this alliance to be wrung from him, an alliance through which even the legitimate succession to the age-old throne of the Hapsburgs might well have been endangered! This torturing thought tormented Francis Joseph through the evening of his days.

The regrettable discord which Francis Ferdinand's marriage produced in the Emperor's family was followed shortly after by discord in the domestic and foreign policy of the Danube Monarchy. The Slavs—particularly the Czechs—began to claim special privileges. Their example was followed by the other nations, while the Magyars, standing out for complete independence, shook the very foundations of the Empire, and above all imperiously demanded the division of the old common army. Carried away by their excessive national ambitions and nothing less than blind with self-intoxication, they were apparently unable to perceive the direct peril which knocked at the gates of their own country when, by the bloody night of June 13, 1903, the Obrenowicz dynasty was removed from Serbia's path and in its place Peter Karageorgievicz, who

had based his programme on the unification of all Serbs—thus including those of Hungary—was raised to the throne in Belgrade. The provocative attitude which Serbia at once displayed and the Government at Vienna could hardly any longer ignore failed to lead to direct hostilities only because Russia, which had been posing as protector of the Balkan Slavs for years, was at that moment involved in her disastrous war in the Far East.

Austria-Hungary ought to have used that favourable opportunity to clear up the situation in the south-east in her own favour. The Emperor Francis Joseph's advisers missed their chance, however. Nor were they equal either to promptly putting some check on the policy of isolating Germany which the English King Edward VII., true to his principles, had taken up with rare diplomatic skill and pursued with no less determination, or, at any rate, extracting from it some of the advantages for the Hapsburg state which the British monarch actually offered.

We are already in the middle of that period during which Francis Joseph, now an old man, sought safety only in the careful avoidance of all complications, and based his political decisions, as far as possible, on the maintenance of the *status quo*. The fact that in the long run this policy of passivity inevitably contained the seeds of disaster was readily realized even by the heir, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, who now came actively to the front inasmuch as in the autumn of 1906 he began to exercise a decisive influence in military affairs. At his orders old and decrepit officers—such as Count Beck, the Chief of the General Staff—were replaced by younger men and by degrees the heir began to have the last word, not merely in the army, but in the entire direction of affairs in Austria-Hungary. Those affairs had already reached a critical stage.

In October, 1908, the situation in Turkey, which blossomed forth in a night into a modern constitutional state,

compelled the Emperor Francis Joseph to active intervention. He proceeded to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina. The then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Aerenthal, carried out this step with such an unexampled lack of skill that not only did a most bitter quarrel with the Ottoman Empire and Serbia result, but a state of enmity with Russia was provoked the tension of which was never more to be relaxed. It was only by the most exhausting efforts that the danger of an immediate war was once more averted, thanks mainly to the conciliatory intervention of France.

It was in this critical atmosphere that the aged Emperor had to celebrate his sixty years' jubilee, that favour so seldom granted to a monarch. The occasion was also saddened by hostile demonstrations by both Hungarians and Czechs.

A temporary improvement in the general situation enabled the Emperor to visit Bosnia and Herzegovina for the first time in May, 1910, and on August 18, 1910, to celebrate his eightieth birthday in profound peace. On this occasion he had all the many members of his family around him and received from his peoples many spontaneous manifestations of unshakable loyalty.

This was, however, the last tranquil interval in the life of the old sovereign for the Italian war in Tripoli, which broke out in September, 1911, led directly in the following year to the first Balkan War. This was followed by the second Balkan War in 1913 which stirred up the South-East once and for all and in its reflex action involved the Danube Monarchy most intimately.

The resulting agitation, which had reached fever-heat in Belgrade, culminated on June 28, 1914, in the political atrocity of the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife on whom the title of Princess, and subsequently that of Duchess of Hohenberg, had been conferred since her marriage. That was the signal for the war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia which was to be

followed a few days later by the mighty struggle of the nations.

In a moment all Francis Joseph's efforts for the maintenance of peace, the object to which he had devoted every hour of his life with imcomparable fervour for the past ten years, proved of no avail. With a bleeding heart the Emperor saw the monarchy swept by the tornado of war and visited by the most ghastly sufferings.

He conferred the supreme command of the army upon the Archduke Frederick to whom General Conrad-Hötzendorf was assigned as Chief of the General Staff with very wide powers. But he kept the direction of state business firmly in his own hands.

Thus began the world-war—under anything but favourable auspices.

The year 1914 closed with serious defeats for the Austro-Hungarian armies which at the outset could hold their own neither against the Serbs nor Russia. These failures inspired Italy to declare war on the Danube Monarchy on May 23, 1915. Although Turkey, and subsequently Bulgaria, joined the Central Powers, so that the fortune of war was decidedly in their favour at the end of 1915, the spring and summer of 1916 brought further serious reverses in the north-east and these nipped in the bud an Austro-Hungarian offensive against Italy which had started most successfully. The important Russian victories induced Rumania to join the foes of the Danube Monarchy at the end of August, 1916, and its uncommonly precarious situation was only just improved by the military overthrow of the new enemy.

The old Emperor Francis Joseph could no longer carry the burden of responsibility which had lain so heavily on his shoulders for two years. His collapse was all the more complete because the heir, Archduke Charles—born August 17, 1887, and a son of the Archduke Otto, who died on November 1, 1906—proved unequal to giving any kind of support to

his aged great-uncle. This was the unfortunate result not merely of personality but of the education and upbringing of this young prince. Perhaps, too, he did not take sufficient trouble with his work.

Be that as it may, the old Emperor was left to his own resources in the weeks preceding his death. By putting forth a supreme effort he did his duty to the best of his powers, even when at the end of October, 1916, he was attacked by bronchitis—ushered in by feverish symptoms—from which he was never destined to recover. Already utterly worn out by mental and physical suffering, he was still at work in his study at Schönbrunn Castle at four o'clock in the afternoon of November 21. Then at last he found himself unable to overcome his weakness. He was forced to take to his bed and by nine o'clock he had breathed his last.

" He died in his harness." To whom could the expression apply more aptly than the Emperor Francis Joseph who disregarded his eighty-six years and more and was called away by God in the midst of duty nobly done!

CHAPTER II

THE OLD EMPEROR HIMSELF

I WAS already turned thirty when a lucky chance gave me my first opportunity of seeing the Emperor Francis Joseph face to face and having a few words with him.

At the end of September, 1900, I was attached to the Italian Mission which came to Vienna to report to the Emperor the accession of King Victor Emmanuel III. The members of this mission, at the head of which was General Count Del Mayno, commander of the Milan Corps, stayed at the Hofburg as the Emperor's guests during their official visit to Vienna.

The day after their arrival Count Del Mayno and his suite were received by the Emperor in an official Ambassadors' audience as the Count had to hand him a letter from the King of Italy announcing his accession to the throne.

There was something extraordinarily impressive about the ceremony owing to the appearance of the splendid guard of officers in their wonderful gold facings who made a hedge of swords in the rooms through which Count Del Mayno passed. When it was over I was particularly pleased to note how much the Italian gentlemen had been impressed by the occasion. Count Del Mayno and his suite could not find words in which to praise the gracious kindness with which the aged monarch received them. Tears stood in the eyes of the Italian general, himself an old man, when he spoke of the touching warmth which the Emperor had shown him.

On the following day a banquet was given in the Kleine

Galerie of Schönbrunn Castle in honour of the Italian special Mission, and I was among the guests.

Seated next to General Count Del Mayno I drove in a court carriage from the Hofburg to Schönbrunn. When we arrived we were conducted by the Master of Ceremonies to the assembly room where the highest court functionaries and military dignitaries who had been invited to the banquet were already gathered. I was just in the act of introducing the Italian gentlemen to those present when, in a moment, or rather in a flash, all conversation suddenly ceased and everyone bowed in a silence in which you could have heard a pin drop. The Emperor had entered the room.

For the first time I realized to the full what enormous and indeed magnetic personal prestige there was about the Emperor Francis Joseph. His sovereign presence had an almost hypnotic influence. All eyes were now fixed solely on the monarch. No one had thought for anything else. The Emperor turned straight to Count Del Mayno, gave him his hand and invited him to enter the banqueting hall. All the others followed, and I with them.

It was not, of course, the first time that I had been present at a court dinner. But the impressive arrangements, the glass and flowers which produced their splendid effect by sheer tasteful simplicity, the subdued lighting, so kind to the eyes, the silent efficiency of the perfectly trained staff, the choice food and wines which followed in quick succession, the lively and yet subdued conversation—in short everything was steeped in such an atmosphere of " inspiration " that one could only go on marvelling and hardly venture to eat.

The Emperor talked brightly with his neighbours on his right and left and the gentlemen sitting opposite him, and his conversation never failed, although his sharp eyes often scanned the other guests present.

There were no toasts and the sovereign merely touched Count Del Mayno's champagne glass with his own. When

the table was removed the Emperor bowed to his guests and went into the smoke-room, whither we quickly followed him and formed casual groups.

Here black coffee and liqueurs, cigars and cigarettes were handed round. The Emperor never drank black coffee. In former times he had been rather a great smoker, never refusing a cigar either after meals or when working. He smoked several a day, preferably the pleasant and strong "Virginia" (which is perhaps why they have become so popular, even though their special qualities make them superior to other cheap cigars). In my time the old Emperor already preferred a rather lighter kind, the "Regalia Media," and only now and then allowed himself one of the long thin Virginia as a reminder of days gone by. At first I had not the courage to take a cigar in my sovereign's presence. Admiral Baron Von Spaun, a very old friend of my father's who was also present, noticed this, selected a cigar from the silver box, cut it and handed it to me with a friendly word, and I lit it at a candle held out by a footman. Meanwhile the Emperor had begun to chat with all his guests in turn, and before I knew where I was he was talking to me.

The Emperor's first question was about my work. When I told him that I was employed in the Operations Department of the General Staff he inquired whether I had been present at the grand manœuvres which had been held at Jaslo in Galicia a few weeks before. I answered in the affirmative. We had a fairly long conversation on this subject and I soon saw with what deep interest the sovereign had followed the manœuvres, which had been on a scale never attempted before.

The Emperor's quiet conversation, free from dialect, and the gentle tone of his rather light voice were particularly attractive. I may as well say at once that the latter has not been reproduced on the gramophone. The tone of the records has not the faintest resemblance to the real sound of the monarch's voice.

The Emperor abruptly dropped the first topic and asked me whether I had always known Italian. When I replied that it was my mother tongue and had always been exclusively spoken at home, he continued :

" Well, how is it that you speak German so perfectly ? I have been told that you published a military book this year which has created some stir in Germany and particularly because it is said to be so well written."

I replied that unfortunately I had only begun to learn German when I was ten and that at first I had found myself faced with great, and indeed almost insurmountable difficulties, so that subsequently I had made up my mind to perfect myself in a language of such outstanding importance to me by reading the best German works I could find, slow and tedious business though it was. The Emperor smiled kindly and closed with the words :

" In that case your efforts were crowned with complete success. I am very glad to hear how determined you were, even in your youth, to realize an ambition which did you credit."

The Sovereign then gave me a friendly nod and, continuing the circle, turned to my neighbour.

I did not then suspect that this first meeting with my aged Emperor was to be followed by many others, and that quite soon. A few days later, however, I learned that my appointment as orderly officer to the Emperor's Aide-de-Camp, General Count Paar, was imminent. As a matter of fact I could not take up the post until the end of December, 1900, as I was sent on a military mission which kept me in Berlin for several weeks.

During my stay there I went to Kiel on an invitation from the German Emperor William II. I remained there several days and saw a good deal that was of interest in connection with the German Navy which was just then in the throes of its enormous development.

When I returned from Berlin to Vienna just before Christmas, 1900, I had at once to set about taking up the duties of my new appointment in the Imperial Aide-de-Camp's Department. This was anything but an easy matter for me, because I had had no previous experience or knowledge of this highly complicated service and found myself faced with utter novelty in every direction. It was in this strenuous but stimulating period that I had my first audience with the Emperor Francis Joseph on December 17, 1900. In accordance with custom, I had had my name put down for the " general " audiences which the Emperor gave in Vienna and Budapest every Monday and Thursday from 10-12 in the morning. An invitation to these audiences followed, particularly when the individual in question was known, as I was, to the Civil Cabinet, without any difficulty. All that was required was that one should give one's reasons for desiring an audience. The reason I gave was my desire to thank the Emperor for my appointment to the Aide-de-Camp's Department and the necessity of reporting my return from Germany, particularly as the Emperor William II. had twice asked me at Kiel to convey his good wishes to the Emperor Francis Joseph and I felt it my duty to carry out these instructions at the first possible moment.

It was with pardonable nervousness that I waited for the great moment in which I was to meet the old Emperor face to face.

With beating heart I ascended what is known in the Hofburg as the " Chancery Staircase," an enormous flight of steps leading to the ante-room of the audience chamber. In the ante-room itself I found acquaintances who were also waiting to be summoned to an audience. I soon overcame my nervousness after talking to them.

The open door leading to the staircase was guarded by a non-commissioned officer of the magnificently accoutred Bodyguard, halberd in hand, while a captain of the Arcièren

Guard and the Hungarian Bodyguard stood with drawn sword at the door leading into the Emperor's audience chamber, which was kept closed while each audience was in progress. The reliefs for these officers had already taken up their places at the table on the window side of the room. The actual work of announcing was carried out by the imperial aide-de-camp on duty for the day. Officials from the Master of the Ceremonies' Department and the necessary door guards, as well as a commissioner of police in full dress, were also present. Everything went off like clockwork and quite noiselessly; notwithstanding all the people present, there was a silence which greatly intensified the impressiveness of the occasion.

The ante-room itself was very large, and on the side facing the inner court lit by high windows between which hung huge mirrors. The other walls were decorated with magnificent pictures representing scenes from the time of the Emperor Francis I., and particularly his return to the Hofburg after his entry into Paris in 1814.

All this claimed my attention very closely and helped me over the minutes of anxious expectation.

When the imperial aide-de-camp on duty told me that it would be my turn I took my place next to the door guarded by the officers of the Bodyguard. As this opened I bowed low and entered the quite small audience chamber in which the Emperor Francis Joseph, in the undress uniform of a Field-Marshal, stepped towards me very erect. He came from a reading-desk on his right, on which a list of the persons appearing in audience lay. The Emperor himself marked the list in blue pencil as each individual was announced. He had put down his general's hat with the green plumes on a small table, a striking detail which shows how the Emperor himself always wore ceremonial dress when he received his subjects, in confirmation of his chivalrous principle: "Respect your inferiors if you want them to respect you."

While I was reporting myself the Emperor was kindly, but critically looking me up and down. From time immemorial he had attached the greatest importance to his officers being dressed faultlessly according to regulation. I had of course borne that in mind, so that I came out well from this searching scrutiny by my sovereign. When I had carried out my commission by conveying the German Emperor's greetings the Emperor Francis Joseph thanked me in a few formal words and proceeded to put a few questions about my stay in Berlin and my journey to Kiel. He listened quietly to my answers without ever interrupting, but I could not resist the impression that the Monarch was not really particularly interested in my experiences.

Yet I had hardly finished before the Emperor remarked, more as a conclusion of his own train of thought than anything else :

" So the Emperor William made two speeches at Kiel. What did he say ? "

I replied that his speech on the swearing-in of the naval recruits had been concerned principally with the importance of the soldier's oath and had ended with a reference to the high opinion which their foreign comrades had formed of the German troops during the trouble in China. The Emperor William's speech on the occasion of the officers' banquet in Kiel, on the other hand, had related almost exclusively to the fact that owing to the unexpectedly rapid expansion of the German Fleet, which was proceeding at full pressure, it was absolutely essential for its officers, who would thus be quickly advanced to higher posts while they were still young, to equip themselves with an intensive training by personal study.

" So the speeches hardly touched political matters ? " added the Emperor Francis Joseph.

I could answer that with a decided negative, whereupon the Emperor continued :

"And didn't the German Emperor make any reference to the future, and possible wars ?"

That too I could deny. The Emperor smiled and added :

"That's a good thing ! Didn't the Emperor William say anything of the 'Yellow Peril' ?"

My answer was that the German Emperor had merely indicated that this could now be considered as averted.

Patently satisfied, the Emperor Francis Joseph concluded with the words : "That can only have referred to China," and dismissed me with a gracious bow and a wish, accompanied by a friendly smile, that I should carry out my duties in my new appointment to the best possible purpose, a matter of which he had no doubt after my previous work in other posts.

The topic of conversation casually touched upon by the Emperor during the audience left me with the impression that he saw a certain element of danger in the speeches of the Emperor William, and feared that they might contribute to the darkening of the political horizon, whereas he himself attached enormous importance to seeing the peace of Europe preserved at any price and under all circumstances.

My work in the Imperial Aide-de-Camp's Department (more than fifteen years), and the mass of knowledge and impressions I gained in that period proved to me from all I directly saw, heard and read of the Emperor Francis Joseph, that, as a matter of fact, with him nothing was so important as the maintenance of peace. At all times the aged ruler wholly devoted all his energies and always set his face to secure that the cause of peace should never be endangered even at the cost of great sacrifices. That was the *leit motif* of this sovereign's whole being, the one great principle to which he believed it was his bounden duty to dedicate his life. It must therefore be accounted one of the most malevolent tricks of fate that he of all men should see himself compelled to give the signal for the world

conflagration. But his is not the sole or first case in which we find this paradox. History has more than enough examples to show. Think of the predecessors of the Emperor Francis Joseph. Who was a greater friend of peace than the Emperor Leopold I., yet his whole reign, a pretty long one, was marked by continual wars! Is not this equally true of the Emperor Francis I., at any rate in the first half of his reign?

I found myself at home with the complicated duties of my new appointment much quicker and more easily than I had expected beforehand. The chief reason was that in many matters I abandoned former customs and, without asking too many questions, drew up my despatches, memoranda and official documents as seemed best to me, my practice being based on my previous experience, especially in the Operations Department of the General Staff. I soon realized that I could do this with a light heart because the Emperor welcomed changes making for greater simplicity so long as they did not violate those principles which he considered absolutely vital for such official routine as concerned himself. Those principles can be expressed virtually in three words, method, reliability and speed. They all go together and mutually supplement one another.

I gradually realized how valuable, and indeed absolutely essential, they are where the sovereign, the highest authority in the State, is concerned, and to-day I am more than ever convinced that without this triple foundation the sovereign's work may not only be wasted but a source of danger. The best proof of this is what happened during the short reign of the Emperor Charles.

The Emperor Francis Joseph was nothing short of an apostle of method, and in that respect few men have been like him. In normal, as in abnormal, times his daily routine appeared to be fixed down to the slightest detail. The result was that there were no ambiguities, uncertainties and sudden changes with all the confusion which naturally

follows them. All documents coming into the Emperor's hands were subjected by him to the most careful, detailed and thorough examination. He made such remarks as were necessary, generally in his own hand, and then remitted them without delay to the authorities who had to carry out the instructions given. I may as well say here that the Emperor Francis Joseph always preferred to give his decisions on matters which were put before him in writing. To use a current expression he was a "paper" worker. This has frequently been made a reproach to him because it has been thought that he thereby lost personal touch with his advisers and ministers and the public.

That may be true to a certain extent. On the other hand, the answer is that the monarch, especially in his later years, naturally felt that he needed to examine all matters put before him very carefully before he came to any decision. He could do so more safely and in greater comfort when he had written documents before him, into which he could go more closely than when the question had only been discussed orally. Another advantage of written communications was that they gave the Emperor more elbow-room, so to speak. He did not feel that his own train of thought was hampered, as happened now and then when people were present. Lastly, the latent distrust which was natural to the Emperor and an element of his very being was also to a small extent responsible. The written word always seemed to him safer than the spoken. For these reasons he often required that oral communications should be supplemented by simultaneous report in writing.

I understood this method of work only too well, and even in my own department I at once abandoned frequent oral conferences in favour of written instructions, circulars and memoranda. The result was that before long irritability, uncertainty, and the frequent shower of questions vanished altogether and gave place to quiet and helpful reflection,

not at all inconsistent with serious and yet rapid work. The change did not pass unobserved by the Emperor and one day he said to me :

" I see you too believe in everything in writing. So do I. You can take it from me that in important matters written communications are not only the safest but also the quickest method. If you really know what you want it is easy to put it down on paper ; but not before ! Most men are afraid of it."

With the Emperor Francis Joseph method in work went hand in hand with reliability and speed. He neglected nothing and never kept documents longer than was absolutely necessary for him to come to a decision. He demanded the same practice from others and he could take strong action in cases where memoranda seemed to him to have been prepared without sufficient consideration, documents struck him as hastily drawn up, or papers with obvious slips were put before him. That his intolerance in this respect was fully justified is proved only too clearly by the state of things which obtained under his successor, who apparently neither appreciated nor wished to appreciate his great-uncle's methods of work, and as a result before long offered the world the unhappy spectacle of the machine of State almost coming to a stop because its highest authority never functioned properly.

I must not lose sight of the fact that the Emperor Francis Joseph's methods of work were essentially simple. There was no complicated apparatus of elaborate formalities in memoranda and documents, no complex of printing presses, no ceaseless telegraphing and telephoning such as are usually found in government departments. The minutes were written on ordinary paper, without any prolix forms of address, and the sovereign jotted down his instructions in ink or pencil. As a rule he was no friend of typewritten official documents, but he soon accustomed himself to them ; nothing was further from his mind than that his personal wishes should

hamper office routine even in the slightest degree. His accommodating spirit in this respect was always noticeable.

When he kept letters or communications which were only written on one side he used to cut off the unused sheet with his paper-knife and keep it by him on his desk with a view, if necessary, to writing down informal instructions, which he then carefully folded in an envelope and sent to the persons concerned.

I pointed out in the Preface that towards the end of his life the Emperor Francis Joseph was left with nothing on earth but his duties with regard to the transaction of State business. He simply knew nothing of other personal necessities. It was only when the daily quota of official business had been transacted down to its last detail that the Emperor allowed himself occasionally some slight recreation, which in Vienna consisted of a short visit to Frau Katherina Schratt—his only confidante—or in a walk with her in the garden of Schönbrunn Castle. At Ischl or Gödöllö the recreations consisted principally of shooting or hunting. But even then he gave up his pleasures readily and at once when, as happened not infrequently, his presence was required, or was likely to be required, in the next few hours, even though the matter were of no great importance.

It was this unflinching devotion to duty which produced the phenomenon that he tended to become less an individual than a mere machine, a process which increased as the years went by. At the last he saw in himself nothing but the leader of his Empire and its peoples.

This "impersonality," carried to its last and logical conclusion, was also responsible for the Emperor's really wonderful kindness to everyone, even the humblest of the palace servants. When the sovereign gave an order he always began it, in marked contrast to the custom of many other monarchs, with the word "Please," even in the little notes in which he frequently, often several times a day, issued

instructions to my department, even though it was run on military lines.

The Emperor's orders were clear and precise in every detail. I cannot remember a single occasion on which any supplementary questions were necessary. He always knew exactly what he wanted.

Further, he always thought of everything, without hints or suggestions from his ministers and officials being necessary, and even the smallest details were clearly fixed in his mind, a result of his wide experience which was far greater than that of any of his advisers and in which he found a never failing support.

The Emperor's outward appearance presented a picture of the most meticulous correctitude. He was no friend of the so-called " easy " clothing. It was only when he went shooting that he wore a sports suit, which may have looked a little old-fashioned but none the less was extremely practical. Otherwise he was accustomed to appear in uniform, and always when receptions or drives were in the daily programme. Only in the early morning or after-dinner in the evening did he exchange his uniform for a garment quite peculiar to himself, a short cloak which came to the knees and was not unlike the Prussian military cloak. The Emperor felt himself entirely at his ease in this " house-coat," which was very comfortable and gave good protection.* He hardly ever wore civilian dress. I only saw him in it once, and that was in March, 1901, when he travelled incognito to Munich for the celebrations on the occasion of the Prince Regent Luitpold's eightieth birthday. He was a model of correction in his dress as usual, and looked extremely well in his long black frock coat. Yet the Emperor

* This was anything but the stock cloak. It was a very individual article of dress made to the Emperor's special instructions. As long as the regulations prescribed black coats the Sovereign wore a black " house-coat," but in the autumn of 1909 he took to wearing a light grey one.

Francis Joseph looked far better in uniform, perhaps because we were so used to seeing him in it that we hardly knew him in anything else.

Although the Emperor attached the greatest importance to being a model of neatness and smartness (I use the word advisedly) in his dress, he not only took the greatest pains to avoid the ordinary exaggerations himself but could not tolerate them in others. He regarded even patent shoes and kid gloves with horror. He always liked well-blacked top boots and washleather gloves. He also hated high collars for officers and trousers with exaggerated creases. They struck him as foppish.

Notwithstanding this, and perhaps because of it, thanks to his well-groomed appearance, the Emperor always gave one the impression of a perfect gentleman.

The Emperor attached the greatest importance to the most punctilious observance of the military dress regulations by all who appeared before him. No one was more particular in that respect than himself. In this matter he was inexorable. Discussion with him was quite useless. A little incident which I once witnessed affords a striking example.

By way of explanation I should say that in the Austro-Hungarian army the " blouse," a loose jacket without buttons and with four pockets in front, had been introduced as undress uniform in the field and for off-duty occasions in place of the regular uniform. At first the sleeves of this blouse were open at the end and could be closed simply by buttons. Subsequently the general fashion was adopted and the sleeves were made closed though buttons on the sleeve were still prescribed by the dress regulations. As the button had now no decorative value and served no purpose whatever the military tailors gradually began to make the garments without them. Thus before long they were nearly all without buttons on the sleeve, contrary to regulations.

During the reviews of the troops in Bruck camp on the

Leitha an orderly officer was detached from the units stationed there for duty with the Emperor, as provided by the regulations.

According to field regulations this officer had to wear his "march" dress, i.e., the "blouse," and this applied to the occasions on which he was invited to the imperial table.

In June, 1904, a certain infantry lieutenant attached for this orderly duty was at the Emperor's table. As dinner proceeded the Emperor scrutinized him very carefully and a close observer could not fail to observe that the sovereign's brow began to cloud. When we rose from table and adjourned to the garden, where the Emperor usually talked to his guests, Francis Joseph went straight up to the lieutenant and thundered at him: "What do you mean by not being dressed according to regulations?" The officer turned deathly pale in his utter amazement; he was deprived of speech and simply stared at his sovereign. It was only too plain that he had not the remotest idea to what the Emperor's angry remark referred. The Emperor understood and continued even more angrily: "You've no buttons on your sleeves. Didn't you know it?" The lieutenant glanced desperately at his sleeve, on which there were no buttons, and replied in a broken, trembling voice: "No, your Majesty, indeed I did not!" Quivering with rage the Emperor exclaimed: "Then you don't know the regulations. It's monstrous!"

His speech was clear and he chose his words well. He spoke softly and thoughtfully. He always kept himself well under control, and the occasions on which he allowed his anger at some particular occurrence to overcome him were the greatest rarities. When his momentary rage had evaporated you would see the Emperor, a man of fine feeling, endeavouring to remove the impression of having half-consciously taken the wrong tack by doubling his kindness towards the victim of his outburst.

The Old Emperor Himself

I only saw the Emperor really roused twice, and curiously enough on the same occasion and for the same reason. I am referring to the reviews at Budapest in the spring of 1909 and 1910. At these reviews the carriages of the Archduchesses were supposed to follow the Emperor's suite as he rode down the front. They then drew up on the flank of the hindmost file and as soon as the Emperor took up his place at the saluting point they came up on his left. It was the Emperor's express wish that this should be done so that the ladies should get a good view of the troops as they marched past their royal master. This manœuvre with the state carriages, which offered no particular difficulty in itself, never really came off, even in Vienna, at any rate in the Emperor's opinion. At Budapest in particular it was an eyesore to him because the " Generalswiese " on the Budapest Plain which was used as parade ground was anything but large and utterly unsuitable for this purpose. It was thus an easy matter for the carriages of the Archduchesses, after the Emperor had ridden down the ranks, to get mixed up with the detachments assembling for the march-past and thus to fail to reach their posts next to the Emperor's saluting point as swiftly and automatically as he desired.

The consequent confusion threw the Emperor into a terrible rage. He began to storm at the officers and coachmen in charge of these carriages and in such a sharp and ruthless tone that the men were simply terrified and completely lost their heads, so that the result was a hopeless mix-up. It was only the arrival of the first detachment at the saluting point which put some check on the unbridled expressions of imperial rage and it was not assuaged for some considerable time, so that even the troops marching past were unfortunately repeatedly aware of it. It was not a very edifying spectacle, particularly as we could never really find out how the carriages of the Archduchesses should have been handled in order to carry out the Emperor's instructions exactly. The upshot

was that I could not get rid of a suspicion that the Emperor's only object was to show that he disliked having ladies with him at a military manœuvre. Too chivalrous definitely to forbid it, he thought perhaps that the method I have referred to, certainly not in the best of taste, might bring about a change. I may be wrong about this, but this impression thrust itself upon me as I witnessed the disagreeable and, to speak honestly, totally unnecessary scene.

Apart from these occasions the Emperor's behaviour to everyone and at all times was marked by the most distinguished courtesy. This was lucky for everybody who was in close contact with the Emperor himself for one word of blame, disapproval or reprimand from the sovereign, however trivial, might easily be fatal to the individual concerned because high officials in the Emperor's *entourage*, or some superior, immediately construed the reproof as a moral sentence of death if they heard or heard of it. With very few exceptions they lost no time in showing that they were more catholic than the Pope himself. Nothing was further from the Emperor's intentions and when, subsequently, usually quite casually, he heard of strong and not infrequently unjust measures being taken against some particular individual on the ground of his having been blamed or censured by the sovereign, he had the decision quashed at once and the matter put right. "Good heavens, I never meant that!" I once heard him exclaim angrily on one of these occasions. "Mustn't I do anything but *praise?* If I don't happen to approve something entirely now and then it's not a hanging matter and there's no need to start cutting the defaulter's head off!"

The Emperor's splendid habit of mind also revealed itself in his unparalleled punctuality which he considered the *politesse des rois* and observed as his first law on all occasions. To avoid offending against this principle a detailed programme was worked out for all his journeys, reviews and other affairs at which he appeared in an official

capacity. In these programmes every phase of the event was most carefully fixed according to a time-table calculated to the minute. In the same way, when the Emperor had to travel to some place for some event on his programme court officials made the journey beforehand for the purpose of fixing times, and it was only after this "rehearsal" that the time of departure and the length of the journey were decided upon so that the punctual arrival of the sovereign at a given spot was thus officially guaranteed. This hourly itinerary, which was drawn up in the Aide-de-Camp's Department, was laid before the Emperor on the previous day. He gave himself time and leisure to read it through carefully and thoroughly digest it, so that in accordance with his immemorial custom he could carry it out to the smallest detail.

In addition the Emperor made notes of all reviews, journeys, special audiences and unusual events in his day's work, generally on his desk calendar at which he always glanced first thing in the morning so that he could know at once what were his principal engagements for the day.

But there was another kind of note-making which was peculiar to the Emperor and it furnishes a remarkable reflection of his habit of mind. He had the habit of jotting down a name or a few words on his writing pad with a view to reminding himself of matters which had no fixed day or hour but were casual or referred to individuals. In accordance with a youthful practice of the sovereign, this pad consisted merely of a folded piece of coarse, white scribbling paper which was changed every week. He would have nothing to do with the elegant tablets which were so frequently presented to him. He always stuck to his plain, broad sheet and the notes he jotted down on it were his *aide-mémoire*. I was once casually in the Emperor's cabinet at Schönbrunn—it may have been somewhere about the middle of September, 1903—and Spannbauer, his

servant, was dusting the desk. Spannbauer beckoned to me mysteriously and showed me on the writing pad the following words written very small by the Emperor: "Wekerle—here again already—ach Gott!—not this time! no! no! . . ." It was not difficult to imagine with what reluctance the sovereign brought himself to call upon the services of Doctor Alexander Wekerle, the Hungarian Minister-President. After this experience and several more of the same kind, I pressed the Imperial attendants to see that when the pad was exchanged the old ones were not casually thrown about but immediately burnt. I extended this order even to the contents of the Emperor's waste-paper basket as they too might frequently have enabled outsiders to draw undesirable conclusions as to the monarch's doings. That this had never been the case was due wholly and solely to the reliability and unfailing discretion of the Emperor's personal servants. I myself was once surprised by a note on the Emperor's writing pad. On August 29, 1906, Egger, the servant on duty, told me confidentially that the Emperor had written my name on the writing pad that day. I was quite astounded, as I could not imagine the reason and when I asked Count Paar whether any change was in store for me he replied that he knew nothing whatever about it. Great and pleasant was my astonishment when on September 6, 1906, the Emperor, as a reward for my six years' work as orderly officer to Count Paar, spontaneously appointed me his Aide-de-Camp—a brand new appointment—and added to it by giving me the Order of the Iron Crown, 3rd Class. Hence the note on the desk I have mentioned. I could not refrain from asking the Emperor to give me the paper as a souvenir, and he gladly complied with my request with the kind words: "Certainly, if there's nothing else you want."

As a matter of fact even these rough and ready notes were anything but a necessity to the Emperor. Even in extreme old age he possessed an unfailing, unique and really

phenomenal memory which retained the smallest details once they had been taken in. It was not only astounding but positively oppressive to hear the Emperor recite details of incidents which occurred in the Fifties and Sixties of the last century or give figures and occasionally even the number of a file relating to matters decades old—and that with a precision and accuracy which amazed everyone. In dealing with ministers and others in conference a well-trained memory which could make short work of omissions and uncertainties was a deadly weapon in the old monarch's hands. At such conference officials had to go appropriately armed, so to speak, if they wished to avoid the humiliation of being put right by their sovereign.

In my whole life I have never known so infallible a memory as the Emperor's. The only man who even approached him in that respect was King Edward VII. of England, who once gave me a great shock just after his arrival at Ischl in August, 1905, by a remark which showed me very clearly that, like the Emperor, he not only forgot nothing but let no detail pass unremarked.

In August, 1903, two years before, I had returned from Ischl to Vienna with serious inflammation of the lungs and had only just begun to convalesce when King Edward VII. paid his first visit to the Emperor in Vienna in the early days of September. I was still hardly able to stand up, but there was nothing for it but to get back to my office to deal with the mass of work the King of Great Britain's presence involved. No one else could take it over for me, particularly as I was one of the few men about the Emperor who could speak English fluently.

In consequence of my condition I did not come into direct personal contact with the King. To avoid a recurrence of my lung trouble I more or less confined myself to dealing exclusively with office business and took no part in the gaieties at court. Yet for all that the King

presented me with a decoration. It was given me in his name and with his best wishes for my recovery.

In August, 1905, on King Edward's arrival in Ischl, the Emperor presented his small suite to the British sovereign who had a short conversation in German with everyone present. When it came to my turn, however, the King immediately asked me in English : " Have you quite recovered from your lung trouble ? I hope it left no after-effects." At the moment I did not know what the King was referring to as I had forgotten all about my illness. I had to cast my mind back before I recollected that I had had an attack of inflammation of the lungs at the time of his first visit.

For a long time I tried hard to find out to what the old Emperor owed his prodigious memory. It was only gradually that I came to the conclusion that it was the result not only of the most determined and diligent practice from his earliest youth, but even more of his highly characteristic conviction that it was his duty to let absolutely nothing pass unnoticed. With the Emperor Francis Joseph everything about him, including his memory, had to be unchallenged, unchallengeable and *à toute épreuve !*

While on this topic I must not forget to mention the Emperor's remarkably clear handwriting which was not only extremely legible even in the pettiest pencil note but a real model of neatness, and that though the aged Monarch's eyesight was to a certain extent failing in the period in which my duties brought me in immediate contact with him. He used to wear horn spectacles when working at his desk, and usually carried tortoise-shell pince-nez for use in reading.

The principle of rigid punctuality was also the foundation of the Emperor's normal daily time-table to which he adhered strictly, if at all feasible, not only in Vienna, Schönbrunn and Budapest, but during his annual summer residence in Ischl and even when travelling.

The Old Emperor Himself

At a very early hour—shortly after 4 a.m.—the Emperor rose, took a hasty breakfast, generally nothing more than a glass of milk, and then worked alone till 7 or 7.30. From that hour he was engaged in the usual daily conferences with the Chiefs of the Cabinet and other officials, the Chiefs of the Military Cabinet always coming first. The conferences usually ended at 10 o'clock and then came the receptions of ministers and native and foreign dignitaries. These audiences with the sovereign often lasted until 5 or 6 in the afternoon with a quite short break for his simple luncheon, served on a table in his room between 12 and 12.30. The Emperor then dined, alone or with guests, and this was the only meal served formally at table. When this was over he went on with any work he had left and retired for the night at 8 or 8.30.

His bed was merely an iron field bed which, like all the other equipment of the imperial bed-chamber, produced an impression not merely of utter simplicity but of downright penury. A far higher degree of comfort was to be found in most *bourgeois* circles. In everything relating to his personal habits the Emperor revealed an unparalleled modesty. He had practically no personal requirements and lived no better than the middle classes in the Empire so that there was a certain contrast between his private life and his extraordinarily lofty conception of his royal dignity, a conception on which he always insisted.

The old Emperor's spartan simplicity was the unshakable foundation of his wonderful health, powers of resistance and extraordinary vigour in the last years of his life. It was only in 1906 that those attacks of bronchial catarrh began which frequently recurred, so that he was never without it until his death. Personally I think it was caused by his habit of having himself rubbed down with cold water every morning immediately after getting up. His constitution no longer had sufficient energy to produce a speedy glow

and many a time he froze for hours after the rubbing down. At last his physician, Dr. Kerzl, advised him to give it up, but the Emperor simply refused to do without the cold friction which had become a necessity to him even though it had already become wholly intolerable.

This perhaps peculiar daily time-table meant that the Emperor was always reluctant to sit up and only did so when special events, such as court banquets, balls, representative visits to theatres and concerts and so on, made it absolutely necessary. Naturally he found these exceptional occasions a more or less unpleasant trial.

In view of this life-long habit it was usually considered impossible to lay even urgent communications before the Emperor after eight o'clock in the evening because it meant waking him, a course on which no one dare venture unless the matter was extremely important, quite unexpected, and so urgent as not even to permit the slightest delay.

Some of the officials frequently and ruefully complained about its being impossible to get the Emperor to deal with anything after eight o'clock in the evening. These complaints implied that it would have been far better if the sovereign had started his day's work later so that he could also have concluded it later.

That was never my opinion. I consider that the Emperor was perfectly right in working on the time-table he adopted. Apart from the fact that it was based on the time-honoured principle that "the early bird catches the worm," by receiving the reports of his departmental chiefs early in the morning he gave himself a chance of issuing all relevant instructions to them or their subordinates without difficulty or overhaste the same day. Further, the Emperor normally expected that the minutes of the orders he gave in the morning conferences, formally drawn up and merely awaiting his signature, should be laid before him either at two o'clock or five o'clock in the afternoon. At those

hours the so-called "portfolios," locked pouches with the relevant and quite informal files, were always brought to his room.

The advantages of such a business-like system had always made themselves felt and all the ministers and departmental heads considered it a real blessing that their sovereign was at any rate a worker who "left nothing undone."

How fatal the converse could be is proved well enough by the two-years' reign of Francis Joseph's successor, a reign in which one could never know for certain, when papers were sent to the sovereign as final authority for approval or decision, when he would send them on for further action. The result was that matters which ought to have been settled immediately without the slightest delay were hung up, because the Emperor would not take time to peruse and sign the file as custom required. I need hardly say that fatal consequences were only too easily involved.

The orderly and systematic speed with which the Emperor worked was an absolutely priceless benefit to the nations over which he ruled, though at first sight perhaps they did not seem sufficiently to appreciate the strength of will which made it possible. The Emperor's admirable method of work was not only an inspiring example to the higher functionaries. It was, of course, adopted by the departmental heads, the leading civil and military authorities, and through them inevitably communicated mechanically to all grades of the bureaucratic hierarchy down to the humblest officials who were in direct contact with the public.

As a matter of fact the Austrian civil service, in virtue of its unimpeachable integrity and swift but thorough and reliable methods, enjoyed a prestige and reputation which extended far beyond the frontiers of the Danube Monarchy. Many a time have eminent and experienced foreigners told me their decided opinion that only the English, German and Austrian civil services were well organized, so that they

functioned smoothly and swiftly and could always be relied on. That this was true of the Austrian bureaucracy was due to no small extent to the Emperor's personal influence, as I could see for myself during the years I spent in the Aides-de-Camp's office. The Emperor knew it and quite properly was not a little proud of it. He once said that he regarded a reliable administration as one of the strongest pillars of national prosperity. He even went so far as to hold that the sole *raison d'être* of the bureaucracy was to do all in its power to preserve and further the interests of the Hapsburgs and at any cost avoid injuring them. He demanded hard, intelligent and practical work from his officials and was never so angry as when he saw hollow phrases or empty talk delay or take the place of practical achievement. Such inaction struck the Emperor in his tenderest spot and he would never tolerate it. It meant woe for someone if complaints of that kind reached his ear. "God help us," he once said, "if we ever fall into the ways of the Latin races. Their officialdom is narrow-minded and antiquated, incapable of higher things or any fruitful work. It is tied and bound with red tape and often drives the nation to desperation. It has always surprised me that the Latin races of all nations, with their quick, sparkling intellects and high civilization, should allow their public and private life to be strangled by a body of officials who have no notion of organization, who continue unreflecting in the same old paths and are incapable of anything but appallingly tedious, if not hopelessly unreal, and therefore unreliable methods. The nightmare of uncertainty must haunt them all the time. One of my most productive tasks has been to prevent a similar state of things here!"

The element of "reliability" was assisted in a very material degree by the truly exemplary reserve which the old Emperor displayed in all his conversation. The rare caution which the Emperor made his rule never confused his

colleagues, as they knew well enough that they would never be let down by impulsive expressions of the sovereign, because there never were any. Francis Joseph always spoke *ex cathedra*, even in private conversation, an eloquent proof of the degree to which he kept himself in hand. He knew well enough what a sovereign's word meant and that a casual loose remark starts wild rumours and cannot be withdrawn and disavowed. The old Emperor never exposed either himself or his advisers to any such danger.

He also made it his duty to listen to the reports of his colleagues quietly and patiently. He formed his opinion while the report was being made and then clothed it in carefully chosen words. When it was finished he came to some final conclusion and the ultimate decision was always his. That was his invariable rule. On the other hand he always gave his officials the right to express a free and frank opinion on the various matters or proposals they put before him, though he was unwavering in his demand that this should be done with the necessary respect for the sovereign. He simply would not tolerate temperamental outbursts, unseemly expressions—however well meant—and gesticulations for the purposes of demonstration in his presence. He was extremely sensitive on this point and behaviour in his presence which overstepped the permitted limits to the slightest degree he never forgot. Even loud conversation or boisterous laughter at his table or in the subsequent conversation were always punished with a reproving glance and he made a note for all time of all those who transgressed in that way. The Emperor was certainly no friend of excessive hilarity and equally disliked those somewhat too lively stories which inexperienced individuals occasionally thought they could put to the best use at meals or on other occasions when the Emperor was present. Francis Joseph regarded such behaviour as discourtesy to his imperial dignity.

Associated with this, perhaps, was a peculiarity of the

old Emperor which struck me at once—the high importance he attached to the act of shaking hands. The only persons with whom he shook hands were the highest political functionaries and military officers, members of the highest nobility, whether they had an official position or were still too young to hold one—the Emperor made no distinction—foreign diplomatists and distinguished visitors and his Aides-de-Camp. No one else was thought worthy of his hand-shake.

Occasionally this habit found expression in a way which almost produced an impression that the sovereign really meant to humiliate or even insult some individual—the very last thing in the world he meant. When the Emperor conversed with his guests after court luncheons or dinners it often happened that distinguished staff officers of the higher ranks stood between members of the aristocracy in the circle. As he came to each aristocrat he at once put out his hand, but he did not shake hands with the officers; in fact he almost seemed careful not to do so, and they had some reason for thinking themselves passed over. I frequently heard that this had given rise to painful misunderstandings and even severe criticism. The Emperor, of course, was quite indifferent; he adhered to his view that for him to shake hands was an altogether exceptional mark of esteem and that he must not be too free with it.

During my sixteen years' service in the Aides-de-Camp's department Francis Joseph shook hands with me once only. That was on May 9, 1915, when I reported myself at Schönbrunn to thank him for my promotion to the rank of Major-General. No one else was present, to my great regret, for I thought that this mark of honour from the Emperor only produced its full effect in the presence of witnesses.

Great was my surprise, therefore, when Count Paar congratulated me warmly next day. To my amazed question: "On what?" Paar replied kindly: "On the Emperor's shaking hands with you, of course! Isn't that worth con-

gratulations ? " When I said that no one knew anything about it Paar replied with a smile : " Oh, but the Emperor told me this morning that he'd shaken hands with you when you reported your promotion to General yesterday."

The incident once more enabled me fully to appreciate the great importance Francis Joseph attached to shaking hands and that he regarded it as in no sense a mere formal greeting but rather as a special distinction for the person thus honoured at a personal and private interview. The Emperor was also extremely sparing with his compliments. He never made them without the most careful consideration, and very properly, because otherwise they would not have been what he considered they should always be—a quite special distinction for the individual to whom they were paid.

This rigid view of his own dignity may possibly have contributed to the opinion which was held fairly widely that deep feeling and sympathy for others was foreign to the old Emperor. This opinion is s und, however, only to a very limited degree. The aged sovereign was a man who had been sorely tried by fate, and in his later years his capacity for emotional impressions seemed numbed. All the same the Emperor was extremely sensitive to the appeal of human feeling and occasionally he revealed real softness of heart. About Christmas, 1900, the German training ship *Charlotte* went down in the harbour of Malaga with a large number of naval cadets on board. Most of the boys came to a tragic end. When I asked my sovereign to approve the draft of his telegram of sympathy to the German Emperor which he had instructed me was to be couched " in particularly warm terms " he shook his head. " That would be right and proper enough in any other case, but my sympathy must be much more intimate and heartfelt on this occasion. Of how many families were these poor victims the pride and joy ! I can feel for their stricken relatives and realize their sorrow just as much as if it were my own ! "

Here is another example. When the Emperor was staying at Ischl in the summer of 1901 the news of the Empress Frederick's death reached us at the end of July. The Emperor Francis Joseph quite disapproved of my draft of his telegram of sympathy to the Emperor William II. which was pretty long and expressive of the deepest grief, in accordance with the relations between the two monarchs.

"Oh no! that won't do at all," he said, in a serious tone. "You ought to know that the Emperor William's mother was not particularly fond of him. He was not exactly on good terms with her and in fact quarrelled freely with her. We must bear that in mind now."

Francis Joseph then went on to give me an eloquent description of the ideal family life of the Emperor William on which this was the only shadow. He was obviously moved as he concluded with some such words as these: "Is there anything dearer on earth than one's mother? Whatever differences may separate us the mother is always the mother, and when we lose her we bury a good part of ourselves in her grave."

I can give another and striking example of the Emperor's delicate feeling drawn from my personal experience. At the end of May, 1914, I suffered the heaviest loss in my life in the death of my father to whom I was utterly devoted, and my Royal Master took the first opportunity which brought me into contact with him to express his personal sympathy with me in my sorrow in words of tender intimacy such as only a father could have used to a son struck down by some bitter blow of fate. This spontaneous expression of heartfelt sympathy alone will be enough to fill me with unspeakable gratitude to my kind old sovereign for the rest of my life.

The innate human kindness of the Emperor Francis Joseph, averse to all spectacular effects though it was, seemed to be based on genuine piety and unwavering faith in God. The old monarch was a convinced Catholic who unswervingly

adhered to the tenets of the Roman Church and conscientiously followed its precepts. Yet he never imposed his religious beliefs on other people and there was no taint of intolerance about him although he highly prized religious conviction in those with whom he came in contact, at any rate in that pure form which has nothing in common with fanaticism or bigotry.

The best illustration of this is a remark which the Emperor let fall at dinner early in December, 1903. We had had a particularly lively autumn at court as the King of England, the German Emperor, the Czar of Russia, the King of the Belgians and the King of the Hellenes had successively paid a visit to Vienna. In the course of the conversation the Emperor reverted to the events of the summer, one of which was the death of the great Pope Leo XIII. "It's a serious loss," said Francis Joseph, "to me and still more to the Emperor William! He was so attached to the Holy Father who was always a true friend of his. His death touches the German Emperor very closely. He has told me himself repeatedly of late." (It is a fact that William II. was on particularly good terms with Pope Leo XIII.) "It is possible that the Emperor William is more in sympathy with the Catholic Church than the Evangelical," continued the Emperor. "It is more congenial to his nature and particularly to his pious nature."

One of the guests here interjected with a doubting smile: "That's hard to believe, as the Emperor William attaches high importance to his office of Lutheran *Summus Episcopus!*" This remark was not at all to the taste of the Emperor for his tone was sharp and rather louder than usual as he replied:

"I mean what I say! No one can doubt William's deep religious conviction. Religion is more to him than creed. I value that in the German Emperor and in anyone else who is inspired with the same conviction."

Frequently I have been unable to resist the impression that the dignified reserve which was second nature with the Emperor

in his later years merely covered one of his personal weaknesses, of which he had several, and that an indefinable feeling of mistrust towards all who came in contact with him also played a certain part. This fact seems to me comprehensible and indeed almost natural in a man who could look back on countless cruel experiences and bitter disappointments, particularly in the case of persons who had to work with the Emperor. His proneness to suspicion tended increasingly to confirm Francis Joseph in his adherence to his determination (probably native to him in any case) to keep his advisers under control and in no circumstances allow them to exceed the limits of the special sphere appointed to them. Those limits were also observed by the Emperor himself with the most meticulous care and fine feeling.

As a matter of fact no one ever succeeded in imposing his opinion upon the sovereign to the slightest degree. All his ministers, departmental heads and other servants were to him wholly and solely a mere portion of the state machine for as long as they were in office, and only existed to keep it in motion as best they could. The result was that not one of them—I speak now of the Emperor's later years—had any definite or controlling influence over him. There was no such thing as a "Camarilla," because the conditions precedent to the existence of such an institution were lacking. The men round the Emperor Francis Joseph always played with the cards on the table.

It was right that it should be so for it could not well be otherwise in an extremely complicated institution like the Danube Monarchy.

I once spoke to the well-known Professor of International Law, Doctor Lammasch, about this peculiarity and he made a most original remark: "In my opinion the Emperor Francis Joseph would yield only to the influence of someone belonging to the highest aristocracy, possessing the most brilliant gifts and the widest knowledge, someone who is enormously

wealthy and never wants anything from him. Thank God there's no such person."

In these few words we have an accurate summary of the old Emperor Francis Joseph's character.

It is only with Doctor Lammasch's last words that I must quarrel, after careful consideration, for I profoundly regret that there was no such person with sufficient authority with the Emperor to show him how to keep pace with the progressive demands of the times in the interests of the State. Unfortunately the Emperor never succeeded in looking ahead and adapting himself to the great changes which have taken place in the course of the last decade, or to the recent but all the mightier advances of modern times which are due to the revolution of thought.

Consequently no heed was paid to that summons to a timely reconstruction of the Hapsburg Empire which would have secured its boundaries, its future and its development, a summons which during the last twenty-five years had been knocking louder and louder at the doors of the statesmen of the Danube Monarchy.

On this matter the decisive consideration with the Emperor, as with so many others, was that such a reform of the great state complex known to us as Austria-Hungary was probably inherently impossible, at any rate by peaceful means.

And are we quite sure that we can dismiss the reflection that the Danube Monarchy only held together so long as its ancient form and structure were preserved and suffered no far-reaching changes ?

CHAPTER III

MEMORIES OF THE EMPRESS ELIZABETH

IT was the morning of that spring Sunday in 1888, a day favoured by the most glorious weather, on which the unveiling of the monument of the Empress Maria Theresa between the two National Museums at Vienna took place. As a pupil of the Technical Military College, which had turned out for the occasion, I was in my place in the ranks on the Ring Strasse in front of the outer Burgtor. The ceremony ended with a march past the Imperial couple. It was the first and last time that I was to catch sight of the Empress. She was tall, like the Emperor Francis Joseph who was of more than average height, slim and distinguished, and she was standing near her husband. I can remember one detail extremely well. From her hat hung a long veil which was fluttering in the wind. It may have bothered the Empress, because just as we were marching past she threw back the veil with an impatient, nervous movement of the arm and in so doing leaned back a little. I thus lost my chance of getting a clear view of her face, a fact which I greatly regret to the present day.

Hitherto I had not heard much of this uncommon woman, least of all in Vienna. It seemed to me that a much greater and deeper interest was taken in her in Trieste, my native city, than in the capital. Apparently she was not popular there in the usual sense of the word. At any rate she was not one of those sovereign's wives who get themselves talked about.

To-day I think I can safely say that it was really only after her death that people began to think about her. The tragic aspect of that event at once threw the limelight on the lonely woman whose existence had hitherto apparently been wrapped in mysterious darkness.

There was a good deal of post-mortem reading, talk and inquiry about her, but even that did not last long and folk went on their way indifferent as before.

If any thought was given to her now and then, it usually took the form of memories of her extraordinary beauty, with which the public had been familiarized by photographs and pictures. The external element was always immediately coupled with those characteristics of the Empress which were summed up in the word " eccentricity." This was occasionally associated with an expression of sorrow for her imperial husband, whose married life had thus been not entirely unclouded.

Conversation on the subject of the Empress Elizabeth moved more or less within these limits. It went no deeper, and seldom further.

When I started on my duties in the Aides-de-Camp's department at Christmas, 1900, and thus entered that exclusive world in which the Empress Elizabeth lived, hardly anyone at court ever talked about her; least of all the Emperor, from whose lips I never heard a word about his dead wife.

This struck me as very strange. Only two years had passed since the Empress's tragic death! It might, therefore, have been expected that many traces of her would still be left even though her special court no longer existed. But even the other officials with whom I occasionally came in contact appeared either to know nothing about her or to be reluctant to talk about her any more.

It was with a deep feeling of regret that I noticed that none of them thought of the times in which a woman's gentle hand had brought beauty and light into the daily life

of the court. Still more painful was it involuntarily to hear occasional remarks to the opposite effect, for example, the irritable outburst of an official whose duties were to accompany the sovereigns on their journeys: "Oh! that was when the Empress was alive, when things were upside down, like everything else about her!"

But I did not hear many more remarks of that kind which always recalled the same memories of her. In the long run I had to admit myself that the Empress Elizabeth had succumbed to that tragic fate which means a pitiless condemnation to oblivion after death of those who are already "dead in life," for even the casual circumstance that during the first year of my duties at court I was present at the unveiling of two monuments of Empress Elizabeth—at Gödöllö in May, 1901, and at Salzburg, two months later—brought me no material to complete the pale, vague picture which I had formed of the deceased.

It was the same with the annual function on the 10th of September, on which day solemn mass for the departed was celebrated. As hardly anyone gave the Empress a thought the service in the chapel of the Hofburg seemed to me nothing but a customary formality, just like the special services on Easter Sunday and Christmas Day. The Emperor alone commemorated the anniversary of his wife's death by descending into the vaults and breathing a long and silent prayer over Elizabeth's coffin. To him the memory of his dear wife still had healing force, though probably to no one but himself and his daughters.

All this made my sympathies go out to this woman, and quite unconsciously I grew to know her more and more. When my duties took me into the great Strangers' Chamber of the Hofburg, I always stopped to gaze at Winterhalder's splendid life-size portrait of the imperial couple. My eyes could not tear themselves from the Empress Elizabeth's face; they seemed bewitched by her truly ideal beauty.

How came it that no one at Court had a kind word for her, or even gave her a moment's loving thought ?

It was only quite gradually that I discovered an explanation which I seemed to suspect rather than find facts to substantiate.

The Empress Elizabeth was a Wittelsbach, and thus shared the special characteristics of all members of that ancient House. It meant that she not only took no pleasure in court life and splendour, its merely formal superficialities and exhausting, idle demands, but was an avowed enemy of everything which smacked of the court. Her whole being was but an expression of her inward life, and this probably gave her a most intimate feeling for the deep things of life and thus made her much more sensitive to joy, and still more to sorrows.

Of the latter not a few were reserved for Elizabeth. They may have played a decisive part in the development of the Empress's character, particularly after the Crown Prince's death, all the more so as she never knew how to look as if she could triumph over her sorrow, or at any rate conceal it for the time being by busying herself in receptions, participation in celebration, courts and all the other functions which form the usual activities of a sovereign's wife. She could not adapt herself to circumstances. She simply evaded such " duties " and refused to recognize them as such.

For all these reasons she remained unknown to the crowd, and the crowd took offence. Public disapproval found expression in the belief, which is still current, that the Empress Elizabeth was mentally abnormal. People may try in this simple way to explain this extraordinary woman's conduct, which was certainly incomprehensible to very many. It is a comfortable method of avoiding a confession that no one knew her or, indeed, knew anything about her !

A few isolated individuals alone had enjoyed the special privilege—it must certainly have been a privilege—of being in close touch with the Empress. To get them to talk freely

about the Empress I had to find suitable occasions, and for me these were few and at first far between. As early as 1901, however, an opportunity presented itself. An Englishwoman, Mrs. De La Touffe-Lauder, living at Toronto, wished to publish a biography of the Empress, taking advantage of the fact that she had once been in personal contact with Elizabeth for several weeks in Ireland. She therefore applied to Count Paar whom she asked to give her reliable details about the life of the Empress. Count Paar did not wish to comply with what he thought was an unreasonable request. He assigned to me the task of further correspondence with the lady and instructed me to get into touch with the former Controller of the Empress's household, the aged Baron Nopcsa.

The Baron proved himself a vivacious and original gentleman. Subsequently I heard that all sorts of stories were told about him and that the origin of his family was said to have been extremely odd.

Unfortunately I could not get much out of Nopcsa. All he did was to keep on regretting that there had been so many changes at Court, and those not for the best since Elizabeth's death. According to him the Empress had been the soul of the Imperial household, not merely on account of her unusual intelligence but more because of her kind heart. Baron Nopcsa ascribed her outstanding personality to the facts that she spoke a dozen languages, was a splendid musician, took a great interest in literature and poetry and possessed a feeling for art in all its branches such as is hardly likely to be found in any other woman. For her reading she preferred serious scientific works. What particularly impressed the old courtier was the complete accuracy of her intuitions about the national soul of Hungary. The Hungarians were wildly enthusiastic about her, a fact which materially strengthened the position of the Emperor in the lands of St. Stephen's Crown. The Hungarians (Nopcsa was himself a

Hungarian) were grateful to Elizabeth for this devotion to their country and have preserved loyal and admiring memories of her.

An "Elizabeth Memorial Museum" was established with nothing less than pious affection in the Royal Castle at Budapest, in which were collected a number of objects associated with the Empress. They included even the clothing, the bodice slashed by the assassin's weapon and soaked in the Empress's blood, which she had worn on the day of her death. The old Emperor satisfied himself with a single official visit to this Museum when it was opened, but he often went there when in the course of his busy day he wanted to return for half an hour to those times in which his wife had been still at his side. On these occasions he always wished to be alone. No one might disturb him in his melancholy reflections.

I gave Mrs. Lauder a general report of what Baron Nopcsa had told me about the Empress Elizabeth. Mrs. Lauder replied to me in several letters in which she showed that she was better informed on the subjects of the Empress's private feelings than Nopcsa himself.

In particular Mrs. Lauder threw an impressive light on Elizabeth's religion. The Empress is said to have been a good Catholic, but all kinds of bigotry, and still more fanaticism, were quite repugnant to her. In the choice of her associates, creed formed absolutely no obstacle. She had great friendships with Greeks such as Rossopoulus and Christomanos, Protestants like Middleton and Baker, and Jews like Baroness Alfons Rothschild. Elizabeth's Christianity was not confined within the frontiers of the Church of Rome but was universal, and therefore truly "Catholic." When she visited Great Britain she took a lively interest in all the creeds she found there, however heterodox they were. Mrs. Lauder insisted that the Empress had most in common with the spirit which animated the ritualistic Church of England.

That would easily explain the fact that Elizabeth's book of devotion at that time was the Rev. John Keble's "Christian Year," which she read most diligently every day. On this subject Mrs. Lauder wrote to me on July 27, 1901, in reply to a letter announcing the unveiling of the Elizabeth monument at Gödöllö:

"The ceremony will be over when you get these lines. How I should have liked to have been there! We English had a great affection for the Empress. She thought as we do and so she loved our country, language, customs and above all our Church. In her view the Church of Rome appealed too much to the senses and too little to the spirit. She did not like Calvinism with which she had come in contact in Hungary; she felt its coldness numb her heart. In our creed, on the other hand, she found much, if not all that the others lacked. When I told her that this idea was reproduced in an old English poem she made me recite it to her, wrote it down at once and by the next day she knew it by heart and subsequently repeated it frequently. She liked it so much. The verses may interest you too. George Herbert wrote them nearly three hundred years ago:

"She on the hills, which wantonly
Allureth all in hope to be
By her preferred,
Hath kissed so long her painted shrines,
That e'en her face by kissing shines
For her reward.

"She in the valley is so shy
Of dressing, that her hair doth lie
About her ears:
While she avoids her neighbour's pride
She wholly goes on th' other side
And nothing wears.

"But, dearest mother, what those miss,
The mean thy praise and glory is,
And long may be.

" Of course you realize that the first verse refers to the Roman, the second to the Presbyterian and the last to the Anglican Church. That's exactly how the Empress Elizabeth read them, so that this thoughtful poem is doubly dear to me because it is also an ' In Memoriam ' of her."

I do not know whether Mrs. De La Touffe-Lauder ever carried out her intention and published the biography. I heard nothing further of her after 1903. Whereas this lady based her opinion on the spiritual qualities of the Empress, what Count Paar remembered most, when the conversation came round to the subject of Elizabeth (which was very seldom), was her physical attraction, elegance and charm. On November 19, 1904, the Empress's birthday, the Emperor was in Gödöllö, and in the evening Count Paar began to recall memories of Elizabeth. He could not praise her beauty too highly and insisted that he thought it quite natural that the Emperor chose Elizabeth the first time he saw her, and would have no more of her elder sister (subsequently Princess Thurn-Taxis), who had originally been intended for him. Count Paar told us with deep regret that Elisabeth, as Empress of Austria, had had to pay a very high price for this stroke of good fortune which everyone had envied her. He went on to say that immediately after the wedding Elizabeth had begun to feel the oppressive influence of her mother-in-law, the all-powerful Archduchess Sophie.

Count Paar had been appointed aide-de-camp to the Emperor in the sixties. His allusion to the fact was as follows : " In my time Sophie was certainly a good old meddler, but Belgian Charlotte had gone. She'd already made Mexico her headquarters. But they must have given the poor young Empress hell earlier on ! We were thoroughly sorry for her ! "

Paar then went on to talk about the Emperor who had really loved his wife but could do nothing against his mother, who seemed to have made it her business systematically to force the Emperor and Empress apart. Her motive was

ambition and also an exaggerated, if well-meant, notion of the Emperor's dignity. In that direction the Archduchess Sophie could not go far enough. She was constantly reproaching the Emperor with having made a miserable match and telling him that he ought to have brought home a King's daughter, if not a queen. In the long run she was so successful that in the sixties the Emperor and Empress were virtually living apart and hardly ever saw each other for nearly seven years. When the Emperor, enormously impressed by political events, came back after Solferino and sought encouragement from his mother, old Sophie could think of nothing better than to recommend him to amuse himself where and how he liked outside. The young Empress, however, would have none of it. She left for Trieste one foggy night and from there travelled to Africa and the East. The two small children, Gisela and Rudolph, were left without a mother. That was good business for the Archduchess Sophie. She now had the Emperor's children also in her power. Her victory was complete. No one in Vienna gave another thought to the far-away Empress. The Archduchess Sophie left no stone unturned to make people forget her altogether. She would not have come back at all if it had not been for the coronation in Hungary.

"The coronation?" I asked Count Paar in astonishment. "What had that to do with it?"

"Wait a minute," said Paar. "When the Emperor was to be crowned in Budapest, his wife couldn't exactly be overlooked or left out of account. There'd have been a European scandal of the first order! To avoid that the Empress had to be brought back at any cost. She came. The Emperor then became another man, and it was then that he acquired that serious habit of mind which he has never since lost. Soon afterwards the birth of the Archduchess Valerie brought a gleam of light into the hitherto darkened sky of the imperial couple's married life."

The Emperor Francis Joseph with the Archduke Francis Joseph Otto, son of the Archduke Charles. (*Photo taken September* 15, 1914.)

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Subsequently I came across others who knew something about the Empress. In Budapest there was the celebrated painter Benczur who described the Empress as a splendid art critic and a first-class painter in water colours. Then there was the well-known sculptor Strobl who considered Elizabeth a clever modeller and a critic of real powers. In Vienna Adolf Sonnenthal could not say enough of the Empress's feeling for literature and the drama and, quoting Alexander Strakosch in confirmation, he used to praise her as a whole-hearted and yet discriminating patroness of the Court Theatre.

The judgment passed on Elizabeth by the sculptor, Kaspar Ritter Von Zumbusch, was not so favourable. For some years Budapest had been busy with a scheme for a great statue of the dead Empress. There were, however, such hopeless differences of opinion about the design that no concrete decision had been reached, particularly as the Hungarian aristocracy, and more especially the ladies, indulged in the most fantastic notions in which personal wishes and vanities naturally played the lead.

In the spring of 1910 several ladies of the high Hungarian nobility addressed themselves directly to the Emperor with a view to getting his approval of the design they patronized —a model representing the Empress on horseback in full coronation robes—and thus putting an end to the debate. The old Emperor disliked both the appeal for his decision and the design itself, because the pose struck him as quite out of keeping with Elizabeth's very special personality. He therefore instructed me to ascertain the views of Zumbusch—whom he considered the highest authority in matters of art. Zumbusch told me that the design in question was ridiculous; that a monument of that kind would certainly have been appropriate for Maria Theresa, who really had been a ruler, but not for Elizabeth who was anything but that, and not even a mother of her country, as she

had taken very little interest in the great mass of her subjects.

"Everything they say about her is invented," he said; "she took no interest in anyone but herself. I really cannot understand why they're putting up a monument to her at all. In any case, she ought to be represented as what she really was, nothing but a lonely dreamer. I believe Bitterlich* has already done it pretty well. Anything else is only a distortion of the facts!"

When I told this, not without a certain trepidation, to Count Paar who was to report accordingly to the Emperor, he remarked that Zumbusch had taken the words out of the sovereign's own mouth as of all the monuments to the Empress Elizabeth he regarded only one as a faithful representation—Chiattone's at Territet.

It represents the Empress in an elaborate lace gown, seated with her head in her hand.

I had only seen a photograph of it and with its grave composure, if not downright melancholy, it seemed to me almost more appropriate for a tomb. It was as if Chiattone's whole object had been to represent the Empress weeping over her tragic life.

I said as much to Count Paar who burst out excitedly: "You're absolutely right! What else was the Empress's life in her last years? It was exactly what she felt like when she left this earth. The Emperor has often told me that nothing but the trained imagination of an Italian like Chiattone could have unfailingly grasped the Empress's state of mind and interpreted it in marble."

In the summer of 1906 the number of my informants was increased by the Empress Eugénie, who was visiting the Emperor Francis Joseph at Ischl. I was placed at her disposal for the duration of her stay which lasted several

* The sculptor of the statue of the Empress Elizabeth in the Volksgarten at Vienna which was unveiled in June, 1907.

days. With her incomparable vivacity she used the opportunity it afforded to draw me into conversation and show me that from early times she had gained an insight into the state of affairs at Court. The evening before she left she summed up her new impression in words of enthusiastic praise for the Emperor and ended up with an expression of regret that the Empress Elizabeth was not there and that the Ischl household in particular felt her absence everywhere. To my remark that I had not known the Empress, Eugénie replied in a tone of soliloquy: "She was a quite exceptional woman! A dazzling beauty, extraordinarily charming; an exquisitely delicate spirit. And what a fine mind! Far too beautiful and wise for this world which didn't deserve her!"

The Empress Eugénie continued in her enthusiastic praise of the Empress Elizabeth, and wound up with the opinion that she was too cultured and foreign in her ways for the Germans, and was more fitted for another society, perhaps French. A striking illustration was her love of Heine, whose German origin did not prevent him from finding his real home in France. In Eugénie's view the German nature was too serious, positive and methodical for that intellectual German Jew.

"It was the same with the Empress Elizabeth. She had to be known and the Germans, by which I mean the Austrians, did not know her with the result that Elizabeth's occasionally extravagant actions were very strictly interpreted, if not misunderstood. The Empress felt it keenly. She began to expose herself to public criticism as little as possible and ended by retiring from public life altogether. Alas, she lost all her chances of resuming her place on the throne at her royal husband's side and went forth to die in exile; a voluntary exile but not less unhappy. Poor woman! Still she's the only sovereign's wife I've ever envied, even after losing her only son. I could feel with her in her grief, for I suffered

the same cruel loss. But Elizabeth still had her husband and her two daughters. She was still the Empress, a mother of her peoples. When they brought me the sad news of my son's death I was a widow, a lonely exile banished from the land in which I had once worn the imperial crown."

A valuable confirmation of this highly individual but none the less profound judgment was furnished to me next year from another source and in a different way. It was again at Ischl to which General Middleton, an Englishman, came on a visit in the summer of 1907. He called on me to ask me to obtain an audience for him with the Emperor. He was an old but very robust gentleman, with clever black eyes which blinked a good deal, and thick white hair and moustache. In his day he must have been a fine figure of a man, but he already had a pronounced stoop. Delighted at having found someone who could speak English, he told me at once that he was well known to the Emperor, as he had hunted with the Empress in Ireland at the end of the seventies and subsequently visited her at Cap Martin.

When I objected that the Emperor did not in principle grant audiences at Ischl General Middleton remarked with a knowing look in his sharp eyes that an exception could surely be made in his favour. He begged me to report his request to the Emperor at any rate.

When I told Count Paar of General Middleton's arrival and his desire for an audience I realized that the unexpected appearance of this gentleman was not very welcome to the general. Count Paar looked annoyed and growled: "If that isn't just the limit!" Next day he brought me a command from the Emperor that under no circumstances must Middleton be invited to the imperial table. The Emperor would give further consideration to the question of an audience and I was to look after Middleton a bit as long as his stay at Ischl lasted. So for the next few days, when my day's work was over I used to call for Middleton at

his hotel and we went for short walks together, generally by the Soolenwege through the Lauffen Wald, and usually ended with a smoke and talk on a seat somewhere.

At the start Middleton's conversation did not interest me particularly. The only subject of conversation he liked was hunting and horse-breeding, or else he poured out reminiscences about times of which I knew nothing.

But when we knew each better I gradually realized that Middleton, an unusually keen observer, was particularly well-informed about the imperial family because the Empress Elizabeth must have given him her confidence and told him a good deal.

It was not very difficult for me to bring the conversation round to that topic pretty often.

Middleton was a thorough-going admirer of the Empress Elizabeth. That his admiration was genuine was proved by the tears which sometimes stood in his eyes when he spoke of her.

He was never tired of saying that he had never seen a better or bolder horsewoman than the Empress. Her feats in the field of sport he considered quite unrivalled. He explained her unique horsemanship as due, not only to her real fondness for that form of sport, but also to the excellent muscular system she possessed, notwithstanding that apparently she was of quite slight build. But the chief reason in Middleton's view was a magnetic, or rather hypnotic power which dwelt within the Empress, a power which enabled her to impose her will upon even the most refractory animal the moment she mounted, and by her irresistible force change it into the most submissive of creatures.

"And mark my words," said Middleton emphatically, "this secret power over animals is peculiar to few human beings, and those possessing it are not generally normal. The Empress Elizabeth had a flair too, and that was useful

to her in riding! Just as useful as in learning languages, of which she knew so many!"

The old Englishman, who could only express himself in his "broadest English," was particularly impressed by this last accomplishment. When he spoke of the Empress his usually dry and anything but fluent conversation at once became animated and phrases almost poetical crept in, as when he praised her tenderheartedness or recalled how generously she remembered all those needing help, and the welfare institutions with which she came in contact during her stay in the South of France.

I myself knew something on that subject. For instance, as long as the Emperor Francis Joseph lived, the "Ecoles Chrétiennes," in Cabbé Roquebrune, Cap Martin, which were managed by Curé L. Albin, received five hundred francs from the private purse on each New Year's Day. The practice was a continuation of the annual donation made to those schools by the Empress in such complete secrecy that hardly anyone knew about it.

"And what a beauty she was!" continued Middleton enthusiastically. "A real fairy! But she never had any luck. Domestic dissensions, differences with her husband and mother-in-law, and then the death of her dearly-loved only son. She never recovered from that blow. It utterly prostrated her! It was then that her incessant wanderings began and millions and millions vanished in building the Achilleion at Corfu. What a pity she didn't come to us in England! We'd soon have got her back to life!"

It was with bated breath that I followed the words of the old man who could rise to such heights of enthusiasm at the mere memory of the Empress Elizabeth, even after the lapse of so many years.

As several days passed and the Emperor still issued no instructions as to Middleton's audience, the latter asked me to make further inquiry, so that he could arrange his departure

accordingly. I did so, and Count Paar brought me the Emperor's answer: "Middleton cannot be received, and he must be courteously, but definitely told so."

When I reported accordingly the old general shook his head and murmured in a tone of disappointment:

"So the Emperor Francis Joseph won't see me. I can understand it. I must not be allowed to awaken the memories of past days—days of tragic associations perhaps. Let the dead bury their dead, as the Bible says. I'm quite content!"

Then he shook my hand in farewell and asked me particularly not to go to the station to see him off. He wanted to be alone with his thoughts.

I complied with his request.

And it was a long, long time before I spoke about the Empress again. Henceforth I was shy of referring to her, after seeing the Emperor's treatment of Middleton.

It was only when the Emperor spent the month of June, 1911, at the Villa of Hermes in the Lainz Tiergarten that the Empress Elizabeth came back to me in spirit, as it were involuntarily.

I have often confessed that words fail me to describe the spell which seemed to fall upon me when I stayed at that château, an original creation of the Empress. Only a being with a rare feeling for Nature could have conceived the idea of making a country-place in the centre of the magnificent and extensive woods of the Lainz Tiergarten, woods completely cut off from the outside world by a wall miles in length and roamed at will by deer, stags, ibex, wild boar and other game. The villa itself, which was a masterpiece by virtue of its contents as well as its unity of style (Renaissance), showed in its most trivial detail that a woman of artistic gifts, exquisite taste and profound knowledge had reigned there. The wonderful peace, remote from the bustle of life, the splendid view over a delicious park

which gradually merged into the dense and ancient woods which shut out the horizon on every side, the internal equipment of the château, which comprised an exquisite collection of choice *objets d'art*,—all this continually inspired me to reflection on the rare personality of the murdered Empress.

On the very first evening of my stay at the Villa of Hermes I gave free expression to my feelings of admiration and found them warmly echoed by Count Paar, and more particularly by Dr. Kerzl, the Court physician. In his official capacity the latter had accompanied the Empress on many of her wanderings—in England, the Riviera and the East—and there obtained an insight into her character all the closer because she was frank and candid by nature and had no secrets from those to whom she gave her confidence. That Dr. Kerzl was entirely worthy of that confidence will be borne out by all who have been lucky enough to know a man so distinguished in every way.

We three sat on the terrace below the villa and took our fill of that rare picture of peace framed in beauty which was before us. After some time I confessed that the idea of building such a perfect country house filled me with enthusiasm.

"That's just what the Empress felt," replied Dr. Kerzl. "She was an inspired artist; her versatility was almost unrivalled, and no one had a stronger feeling for the beauties of Nature."

"And a musician, too!" added Count Paar. "How bewitchingly she played the piano. And the zither! Nor must I forget her dancing. Grace personified! Everything about her was delicate and refined."

"Same with her love for the Emperor and her children," added Dr. Kerzl.

I suddenly recollected that Dr. Schmalzhofer, the tutor of the elder sons of the Archduchess Marie Valerie, had once told me that the Empress had bought a musical-box for

the small Archdukes on September 9, 1898—the day before her assassination. She had packed it herself and posted it to Wallsee which it reached on September 12. Tears came to everyone's eyes on the arrival of the gift, a proof that in spirit the Empress Elizabeth was with her dear ones, even after death had claimed her.

"When I think of the Empress," I said at length, "and all I've heard of her gifts, education and personal attractions, I must admit that a finer woman never sat upon our throne!"

"Yes," added Dr. Kerzl, "the Emperor unquestionably won a great prize when he won her!"

"And like everything else," interrupted Count Paar in gloomy tones, "it turned out to be a blank."

A considerable silence followed this remark, but Count Paar eventually interrupted it: "The Emperor never had any luck. It is quite possible that a less brilliant wife would have suited him better. It was too long before he understood her."

"That's quite likely," agreed Kerzl, "although as the Empress told me herself she left no stone unturned at first to be all that he wanted her to be."

"I know myself," said Count Paar with some warmth, "how she went in for study most industriously when the Archduchess Sophie, the Emperor's mother, charged her with being insufficiently educated for an Emperor's wife. She spent days and nights learning languages, the history of Art and everything else, and her success was astonishing. Every court she held proved it. She could talk intelligently with every guest on his special topic; so much so that distinguished savants have often told me that they could not have anticipated such familiarity with all spheres of knowledge in a highly intellectual man, let alone a woman and an empress. But even that was no good. In the end she was regarded as mentally unbalanced!"

"That's a peculiar thing," replied Dr. Kerzl in a

reflective tone. "Her invincible horror of publicity was one of the roots of the Empress's character. Her super-sensitiveness to the indiscreet curiosity of the public kept her from showing herself officially. That is why she so often travelled incognito, hoping thereby to escape recognition and avoid the inquisitive stare of the crowd. She was quite aware of this aversion and suffered not a little in consequence. In the long run she began to regard it herself as a sign of mental disorder, particularly after the death of the Crown Prince Rudolph, which permanently upset her spiritual balance. She said to me in despair one day:

"'The Emperor should never have married me; I have inherited the taint of madness! My son did too, or else he would never have treated me thus!'

"In moments of mental depression she unguardedly used similar words to others, so that many people gradually came to believe it was true and in the end that view was held. Quite wrongly! The Empress certainly had her peculiarities: she was none the less one of the most intelligent and pleasant women I have ever met."

The real truth of this matter lay in these words of Dr. Kerzl, of whom I have always had an extremely high opinion. I felt it, so to speak, instinctively that evening at the Villa of Hermes. I could not help bringing my train of thought to a conclusion with the ancillary question whether the Emperor really loved the Empress.

Count Paar insisted that he was quite certain of it for many reasons, and particularly from things said on occasions on which speeches are not, and cannot be made. After the Crown Prince's death, for instance, the Emperor had said to him:

"If it hadn't been for my wife, who kept me going with her superhuman strength of mind even though she was stricken with grief herself, I should have gone under altogether."

Count Paar was silent for a time, overcome by melancholy reflections. Then he continued:

"More than nine years later the Emperor received the news of his wife's assassination. Bereft of all reason and self-control he stammered out: 'No one knows how we loved each other!'

"These words, wrung out of him by grief, were no pretence. The eyes with which I watched the broken-down old man did not deceive me. The Empress had ever been the highest object of the Emperor's reverence on earth."

That may be true enough in itself, but all the same the Emperor's married life was an unhappy memory to him. It is proved by many casual remarks he made, of which perhaps the following is the best. During one of the usual drives from the Hofburg to Schönbrunn, on which the sovereign was accompanied only by the aide-de-camp on duty, he began to speak about marriage. The aide-de-camp, Commander Baron von Höhnel, remarked that he was unmarried.

"You're very much to be envied!" cried the old sovereign impetuously; "you ought to be very glad; only those who have been married know how terribly difficult life can be. You can take my word for it; I am speaking from bitter experience!"

One can understand this remark of the aged Francis Joseph for he must have expected more—far more—from his affectionate and highly intellectual wife than she actually gave him. In this connection I recollected a significant remark let fall by the Court Chamberlain, Count Cziráky—predecessor of Count August Lichy—one day when we were talking about the Empress. I noted it particularly because Cziráky—perhaps the perfect courtier and certainly one of the most distinguished individuals I ever met at court—was always a model of caution in what he said. A number of people who had gathered round him after dinner at court began to talk very enthusiastically about the Empress Elisabeth,

although not one of them had known her personally, and of course there were the usual lamentations for her tragic fate. After reflecting a moment Cziráky burst in with the sharp and decided remark: "There's no doubt that the dead Empress did a great deal of lasting good for us Hungarians. I'm a Hungarian myself, body and soul. Yet I can't work up any enthusiasm about her. Indeed I can't! Everyone must agree with me that she never had the slightest idea how to play the part of her husband's partner on the throne, or to make his extremely formidable task any easier for him. But as the wife of so sorely tried a sovereign that was exactly what she was there for! She was anything but equal to such a position and indeed hardly ever took the trouble to fulfil her high and surely honourable mission, so that I can never regard the Empress Elizabeth as in any way an inspiring figure. Of course I still feel pity for her, but not much else!"

To revert to my conversation with Count Paar and Dr. Kerzl, I may say that when they returned to their rooms I went back to the inner court of the villa and walked about in one of the alleys. On my left hand I could see, half concealed in the trees, the marble statue of Aspasia, the work of a master hand.

Her we regard as the friend and good genius of the immortal Pericles, that greatest son of his country who still seems to us the most illustrious figure of classical Hellas. Perhaps the Empress Elizabeth may once have contemplated playing a similar rôle. She may have striven to copy so noble a model. That she in no way succeeded in her efforts must have been one of the most terrible disappointments of her life.

I could realize only too well how the broken-hearted Elizabeth had chosen this spot, her favourite residence, for the monument of the celebrated Athenian. After all I had heard of the dead Empress on that evening the figure of

Aspasia came to have a wealth of almost mystic significance for me.

I stood gazing at it. Lost in contemplation of this monument, which most people fail to notice, Elizabeth's earthly pilgrimage, with all its perplexities, all its many paradoxes, passed clearly before my eyes. A half-opened bud, she was transplanted from an idyllic toy court to the cold Hofburg at Vienna. It froze her. She was longing for a heart at which her own could warm itself, and found none. The humiliations she suffered at the hand of the Archduchess Sophie were intensified—probably without any evil intention, but all the more cruelly—by her husband, who yielded to none but his mother. The undoubted love match of the imperial couple soon showed rifts which grew wider and wider, although they were most laboriously concealed from time to time. Francis Joseph and Elizabeth drifted further and further apart; their paths now crossed only occasionally and separated again as soon as possible. Then the Empress was stricken by fate in the shape of the Crown Prince's death. Crushed already, she no longer had the strength to hold up against this trial. She sought in vain to cling to family ties, but these were no longer strong enough to bring her back to the normal routine of daily life, now that her whole being was thrown off its balance.

She began a frantic search for the impressions which travel in far countries and the manifold interests of art could offer her.

Such was the origin of the Achilleion at Corfu, set in the midst of the beauties of the South, of which the world heard so much at that time. Opinions on the subject of this creation of the Empress Elizabeth were extremely conflicting, but they all showed that she no longer possessed that sure and enlightened judgment which she must have possessed when she took in hand the erection of the Villa of Hermes.

The Achilleion may have been superior in sheer magnificence to that château, but from all I heard it is an edifice which not only lacks any approach to unity of style but astounds, rather than charms the visitor by a certain impression of unrest. This view was confirmed by some water-colours of the Achilleion which were shown me. They proved that the Empress's main motive was to find some wholly absorbing occupation which would furnish a distraction to her tortured mind and bleeding heart. Hence the incoherent element both in the structure itself and its furnishings, the profuse employment of all possible decorative devices without regard to their surroundings and the expenditure of enormous sums which could hardly be justified by the object in view. At the beginning of the nineties I saw in Vienna Professor Matsch's picture of Achilles which was intended for the portico. It had been conceived and inspired by the Empress. Only an artist of the most subtle gifts could have imagined a picture of such rare beauty.

It was in occupations such as these that the Empress found temporary distraction and possibly a brief relief from her grief.

For nearly ten years she thus kept her leaking barque (for that was what her life had now become) afloat. With no one at the helm it was buffeted hither and thither by the waves until quite suddenly it sank.

"Who would do me any harm?" the Empress Elisabeth is said to have remarked before her last journey when someone warned her that danger threatened. "Why, I always kept out of politics, so much so that I have hardly been an Empress at all!"

Yet such a criminal existed, that Luccheni whose brutal blow severed Elizabeth's life-thread, frail as it had been for so long. But Elizabeth's spirit, which had suffered so terribly, was ready to defy this last wound even when the murderer's weapon was in her heart. Though the blow was

fatal the Empress rose from the ground, struggled to the steamer on which she was to embark at Geneva, and it was only when she reached the gangway that she collapsed. When a passer-by tried to brush the dust off her clothes she cried out: "It's not worth while. Thank you very much."

Her dying words were words of thanks!

All this seemed to pass before the eyes of my mind as I gazed at the marble Aspasia whose outlines were already dissolving in the gathering darkness. As I slowly walked away an inspired mood had me in its grip. I felt that although I had only had a fleeting glimpse of the Empress Elizabeth, and that when I was a boy, I knew her better now than all those with whom she had been in daily contact; at any rate, I felt like that. What a matchless woman she must have been when everything she created spoke of her so eloquently, even after her death. That carried my thought on to the Emperor and I sympathized with him, sympathized deeply. . . .

The spell which held me fast and kept my thoughts unchangingly fixed on the Empress Elizabeth was broken on the following day. Early in the afternoon I saw Frau Katherina Schratt, the friend of the Emperor and his dead wife, drive in a car up the splendid avenue and stop at the Villa of Hermes. Later on from my window I saw the Emperor and Frau Schratt walking and talking amongst the flower-beds in front of the château, and then enter a carriage for a drive in the park. The sight did something to sober my imagination.

A few years later I became personally acquainted with Frau Schratt, the witty artiste. In her Viennese home—as eloquent a witness of the splendid education and perfect taste of Frau Katherina Schratt as the Villa of Hermes is of the Empress Elizabeth—I soon realized that there must have been much in common, both in thought and in action,

between these two women. I was not surprised now that the Empress had always found pleasure in the natural wit and simple, yet all the more genuine, kindness of Frau Schratt so that she was ever a most welcome guest in the imperial household. Frau Schratt fully returned the affection which the Empress Elizabeth showed her. Seldom has any woman preserved so dear a memory or felt such whole-hearted admiration of another as Frau Schratt of the Empress. She talked to me several times about the dead Empress and filled in the picture for me by showing that in addition to her unusual gifts and bewitching beauty, she had a heart which ached to alleviate the sufferings of humanity and had genuine sympathy with its sorrows.

Looking back I can say now that the appearance of Frau Schratt in the midst of the hallowed impressions which the Villa of Hermes had made upon me cannot be called an unwelcome intrusion, for she also was one of the many who had certainly been inspired and carried away by Elizabeth. The Empress had feelings of friendship for few women, but there was no reserve in her affection for Frau Schratt. She was frequently her guest in her quiet home at Hietzing and was never happier than when her friend was with her. Who knows how often Frau Schratt drove up the avenues to the Villa of Hermes at times when the château was the Empress's one and only *buen retiro.*

My personal contribution from my own recollections of the Empress Elizabeth has necessarily been but small, but my readers will at any rate have realized that it is scarcely possible rightly to estimate her personality or her nature by applying the ordinary standards of practical life. A sovereign's wife of her quite special stamp is not to be measured thus. Elizabeth cannot survive that sort of test. Her personality can only be grasped by those who look at her from the purely spiritual point of view, divorced from all earthly

considerations. How hard it is to do so is illustrated by the following lines :

" Seek her in the stars, or the sun's golden rays,
Seek her in dreams or prayer,
Seek her in the world of ideals,
The Empress Elisabeth."

CHAPTER IV

MEMORIES OF THE CROWN PRINCE RUDOLPH

THE great spring review on the Schmelze parade ground in April, 1887, was the first time I ever saw the Emperor Francis Joseph, and it also gave me my first and last glimpse of the Crown Prince, Archduke Rudolph. He was in command of the first detachment to be reviewed, a detachment of which the Technische Militärakademie, of which I was a member, formed part.

On this occasion I had plenty of time to observe and study the Crown Prince.

The impression he made upon me was peculiar. He was undoubtedly a fine, well set-up figure. He looked well in his smart general's uniform, and he rode his thoroughbred with great skill. But on the whole he looked to me tired, bored and absent-minded, so that even to-day I can hardly resist a feeling of dissatisfaction when I recall the incident.

The Crown Prince Rudolph greeted the report of our Commanding Officer by casually touching his hat with the index finger of his right hand. He did not say a word. Then he took his place on the flank of the detachment and gazed vacantly into space.

He had nothing to say to any of the officers of his staff, nor to any of the generals present. For several minutes his whole attention seemed to be claimed by some mud splashes on his boots. (There had been heavy rain during the night

before, and the ground was very soft.) At his orders a groom dismounted and carefully wiped his shiny boots and his trouser bottoms with a cloth. When this was over the Crown Prince relapsed into his previous and perhaps studied attitude of unconcern and stared into space without taking the least notice of what was going on around him.

When the Emperor arrived the Crown Prince vanished from my view. I never saw him again.

This first impression remained, and perhaps still remains, the outstanding one for me. I hardly ever felt really drawn to the Crown Prince. Of course this is merely a subjective feeling of mine and, based as it is on youthful impressions, it may be wholly erroneous.

Even at that time I had heard a good deal about the Crown Prince, and that entirely favourable. Great hopes were placed on him. His striking intellectual gifts and unusual abilities were praised in all quarters. I often heard it said that mentally he was far superior to his imperial father, so that greater things could be expected from him than from Francis Joseph, who had been so unfortunate in all his undertakings. I must frankly admit that I believed that no longer, once I had seen the Crown Prince himself. He struck me as a man who was already worn out whereas the Emperor, with his erect carriage and his sharp eye taking us all in from head to foot on parade, was the personification of energy.

In the following year, when I was spending my summer leave with my people, I had a glimpse of the Crown Princess Stephanie at Pola, just as she was arriving at the station to go on board the Imperial yacht *Miramar*. In contrast to my feeling for her husband, I was carried away by my admiration for that beautiful woman who carried herself with such charm and ease and always had a friendly smile or a few kind words for everyone. I compared her at once with her husband, the absent Crown Prince, of course to the disadvantage of the latter. On this point I was certainly wrong,

as I subsequently heard on all sides that the personality of the Crown Prince was in every respect far superior to that of his wife who could hold her own only as regards outward appearance.

A few months later, during the afternoon of January 30, 1889, the news of the Crown Prince's death came like a thunderbolt to the Technische Militärakademie at which I was still a pupil. All work was stopped at once. Breathlessly we caught at every speck of detailed news. The words "hunting accident," "murder," "suicide" were flying about. The news of such an unexpected disaster threw everything out of gear, and it was not before the funeral ceremonies that the waves of general excitement subsided. With the Akademie battalion I stood in the Mehlmarkt opposite the Church of the Capuchins when the young Crown Prince was buried in its crypt.

His career on earth was short, and ruthless fate carried him off while still in the bloom of youth. Was it his own fault? May it not be that the fault lay in his conception of life, a conception culminating in the expression *courte, mais bonne*, which has come down to us from Madame de Pompadour.

In the following September, after I had been promoted Lieutenant, I made an excursion from Baden to Heiligenkreuz with my parents and a few friends. There we were taken to the cemetery where the Crown Prince's companion in death, Baroness Marie von Vetsera, had found her last resting-place. On the base of the cross on the grave I read the words of Job:

"We grow up as a flower and are cut off."

My heart went out to her. I felt deep sympathy with the dead woman and also with the Crown Prince.

It was long before his death ceased to be talked about, not merely because, apart from all the usual evil consequences,

there was no longer a direct heir to the throne of the Hapsburgs (as the Crown Prince only left a daughter), but mainly owing to the mysterious circumstances of the tragedy.

But it was all left behind at last, especially as the Emperor, unwavering and unbowed, held the reins of state firmly in his grip and thus openly proved that to him the fulfilment of his duty was more important than the melancholy and disheartening knowledge that his son would no longer reap the fruit of his labour and strivings.

In any case at the time I took up my duties in the military cabinet there was no more talk about the Crown Prince.

The remarks I made in the last chapter in reference to the Empress Elizabeth apply even more forcibly to the Crown Prince Rudolph. Besides, nearly twelve years had passed since his death and the few traces of the Crown Prince had completely vanished. Even his memory was no longer kept alive. A further explanation was the fact that everyone carefully avoided mentioning the Crown Prince, either intentionally or as a result of orders from above. There was apparently a dark side to his tragic death, a smarting wound which no man might touch. Nor must I omit to say that but few of the Court officials with whom my work brought me into touch had known the Crown Prince Rudolph personally.

It is none the less somewhat striking that Count Paar, of all men, who usually gave me his full confidence could hardly bring himself to mention the Crown Prince's name. The fact that he deliberately took the greatest pains to avoid doing so did not escape me. I found this out on January 30, 1901, the very first anniversary of Rudolph's death after I took up my duties at Court. The Emperor had visited the crypt of the Church of the Capuchins the first thing in the morning to pray at the grave of his son. When I announced his return to the Hofburg to Count Paar I made some reference to the melancholy incident :

"Let's leave that," said Paar, interrupting me. "That's a subject we don't like to talk about."

He hastily began to talk about something else and I knew that he was not merely averse to speaking about the Crown Prince, but that he plainly considered it essential to maintain silence on the subject. I took the hint. Even in conversation with others I carefully avoided revealing any sort of interest in the fate of the dead Archduke Rudolph, especially when I became aware that the Emperor regarded the second marriage of the widowed Crown Princess Stephanie as in a certain sense an insult to himself and the memory of his dead son. This was a further reason for letting the memory of the Crown Prince sleep. Thus the veil of oblivion which was intentionally drawn over him was even more impenetrable than that over the Empress Elizabeth.

It was only quite casually and occasionally that it was lifted, even for me.

In the summer months the old Lieutenant-General Latour von Thurmburg, formerly the Crown Prince's tutor, used to stay as a guest at Ischl. The Emperor was very fond of this officer, who had grown grey in loyal service, and always paid him special attention. This was one of the many chivalrous characteristics of the sovereign. He still preserved a strong feeling of gratitude to Latour for the services he had rendered to his imperial son although in a certain sense they had borne no fruit.

Until I knew Latour personally I had a certain bias against him which was intensified when I read certain publications which came into my hands during my residence in Berlin in 1900, and in which he was very badly spoken of. I held him partly responsible for the Crown Prince's inglorious end. Thus I was not anxious to have any personal dealings with him and it was with considerable hesitation that I accepted the invitation he once gave me to call on him occasionally. All the greater was my pleasure at finding him very different

from what I had imagined, and the evenings which I spent in conversation with Latour, who was not only extraordinarily cultured and well-read, but also extremely kind, were particularly stimulating.

I need hardly say that it was not long before we got to the subject of the Crown Prince. I told him that I had never been able to gather any clear idea of what he was like.

"I can well understand that," said Latour. "I myself knew the Crown Prince pretty intimately, but he always seemed a puzzle to me. One thing I must say, however; I've never met a more talented man than Rudolph. If only he'd had as much character as talent. That's just where he fell short. Everything came so easily to him that in the long run he began to think that he was omnipotence personified, and the flattering parasites who hung round him—like every other Archduke—deliberately did everything they could to make him think that perilous notion was an irrefutable fact. He thus lost his moral balance, left serious work alone and ultimately devoted himself to that unceasing round of pleasure to which he ingloriously succumbed only too swiftly."

I could not resist objecting that there must surely have been someone possessed of enough influence to recall the Crown Prince to his senses in time—the Emperor, the Empress, or the Crown Princess!

"When destiny is to be fulfilled there is no one who can stay its course," replied Latour in a tone of resignation. "Of course the Emperor displayed—in his own way; you know him!—a lively interest in his only son, but you are familiar with the ordering of the Emperor's day. In his time-table there was no hour set apart for the Crown Prince. Yet the Emperor ought unquestionably to have made time. This problem was far more important than most others!" said Latour in melancholy and irritable tones.

A long silence followed.

Then Latour began to tell me how there had been from

the start a complete lack of system in the Crown Prince's whole education. The Archduke's tutors were always selected for some particular and private reason, and thus their various points of view were too heterogeneous for the intellectual development of the Prince to be really fruitful and uniform. Most of them let him have his way, some because it was the line of least resistance, others from selfish personal motives, instead of using the necessary vigour to keep him to systematic study and the honest fulfilment of duty. The only strong man among them, General Count Gondrecourt, treated the Crown Prince like a recruit, frightened the life out of him so that when he had finished with him his pupil was intellectually a whipped dog. On top of all this came that "archducal" military education, the sole purpose of which was to rush Rudolph up the hierarchy at breakneck speed and familiarize him solely with the merely agreeable side of the soldier's life such as formalities, good company and outward show. It was principally this purely superficial military career which had proved fatal to the Crown Prince. He was far too gifted not to realize its emptiness instinctively and then convince himself of it. By way of distraction he tried to help himself through this phase of his life, which in the long run was thoroughly monotonous, by a ceaseless round of pleasure. Thus everything went wrong. The Emperor either could not or would not take the trouble to look closely into the doings of his son. As far as outward appearance went he knew nothing of what was going on round the Crown Prince and he was always being led astray by the zealously flattering reports—perhaps intentionally flattering—of his son.

I listened to the old General's words with the closest attention. When he paused I encouraged him to continue the conversation by putting the question: "What about the Empress?"

"The Empress!" said Latour slowly. "She loved the

Crown Prince well enough and that's about all you can say. She was far too tolerant of everything he did, good and bad alike, and always gave him help and protection so that even when he grew up he always relied on his mother getting him out of his most foolish scrapes. Unfortunately, too, she never had any special influence on his real training —his childhood, when a mother's hand was so essential. It was just about then that she was away for years at a time."

I could not help recalling what Count Paar had said on this subject.

"Then his marriage destroyed the last relics of goodness in the misguided man who had once justified the brightest hopes," continued Latour with a deep sigh.

"The marriage was hatched by the diplomats and the Emperor was all fire and flame for it. To him, a legitimist fanatic, it meant fresh splendours for his glorious dynasty. Into his House came a King's daughter who was related to nearly all the royal families of the day.

"The Empress Elizabeth thought otherwise. For quite a long time she withheld her consent to the marriage proposed for her son. She positively hated the King of the Belgians, Leopold II., and had no sort of liking for his wife, the insignificant and colourless Queen Henriette. Nor did Elisabeth think much of Princess Stephanie. She considered her education too shallow and her nature too frivolous. In view of the Crown Prince's difficult character the Empress thought these elements promised no good.

"'Nothing good can come out of Belgium! Hasn't Charlotte been experience enough for us?' she exclaimed bitterly."

Our conversation for that evening broke off at that point, but we resumed it a few days later. Latour referred to the Crown Prince's marriage once more and endeavoured to prove that it had been a real disaster from the very beginning. As the Empress Elizabeth had rightly feared, the Crown

Prince, a highly intellectual and intelligent man in spite of his mistakes and weaknesses, soon found himself repelled by his wife who was a bigot on one hand and on the other a thoroughly superficial woman who cared for nothing but social inanities. An early result of their conjugal troubles was that the Crown Prince sought distraction elsewhere. As his home ceased to have the slightest attraction for him he kept away from it as often and as long as he could. This behaviour gave Stephanie, a woman inclined to jealousy in any case, a constant excuse for the most biting reproaches and unpleasant scenes, and before long the marriage was hopelessly shipwrecked. To this result the Empress herself contributed, though perhaps unintentionally, by always taking her son's part in the continual squabbles between the couple, and making no secret of her dislike for the Crown Princess.

"This was the time," said Latour, "when the Emperor could have intervened most successfully if he had kept the Crown Prince's mind occupied, initiated him into the business of government and made him play his part. Serious productive work would have taken up the whole of the Crown Prince's time and I am firmly convinced that if he had been trained properly, *in time* he would have devoted himself to such duties with the same serious interest as he always displayed in his private studies in natural history. But he should have been found some occupation more suited to his intelligence and self-confidence than the military appointments which were nothing more than distinguished amusements for archdukes, appointments such as that 'General Inspectorate of Infantry' which was established specially for the Crown Prince but was merely a sinecure."

Here I interrupted with the question: "Wasn't the Crown Prince a good soldier?"

"No, he lacked almost everything in that respect!" replied Latour in a decided tone. "He certainly had good

military knowledge, but he wasn't cut out for an officer. He was totally unfitted for the post of regimental commander. When he was in temporary command of the 36th Infantry Regiment at Jungbunzlau he didn't bother about the men at all and the erratic way in which he treated the officers was unprecedented. There were times when he actually used force against them on parade.

"The Crown Prince Rudolph hated military discipline and looked on details with sheer contempt. In this he was the very opposite of the Emperor with whom the knowledge of military details was a strong point. The Crown Prince's passion for freedom was an inheritance of his mother and it was so strong that Court life and the strict etiquette which the Emperor always exacted seemed to him a horrible relic of the Middle Ages. Like his mother he had as little to do with it as he possibly could. Nature and nature study were his special hobby.

"I must freely admit that I seldom met a more enthusiastic hunter and sportsman or a closer observer," said Latour.

"His practical studies and wide, many-sided knowledge of natural history used to astonish even the specialists."

What a malicious turn of fate it is that a man of such good disposition should succumb to the small trials and great temptations of life, and that there was no one who was able to turn those energies, the existence of which was proved by the Crown Prince's useful scientific work, to use in that high calling which birth had assigned him.

Could he have been a good ruler? The question cannot be answered offhand. He was lacking too much in self-control for statesmanship. On the other hand, with his open mind he would have completely realized the practical needs of the times and it is therefore not impossible that the world might have been as pleasantly surprised by him as it was by Edward VII. of England. He certainly had

many points of similarity with the latter; otherwise they wouldn't have been such good friends!

Latour smiled significantly as he said: "The Crown Prince Rudolph was also on good terms with Emperor William II., who was almost his own age, though the Emperor, fortunately for him, had been influenced by the strict training to which Prussian princes are subjected and could not therefore keep pace with the Austrian Crown Prince on whose sayings and doings there was no kind of check." Then Latour brought the conversation to a close with a friendly "More next time!"

It was a few days later when I revisited the old General to whom it was such a pleasure to talk. I found him in a good humour and thought I could now venture to get something authentic out of him on the subject of the Crown Prince's mysterious death. Curiously enough, Latour showed that he was not particularly well informed on this topic. I haven't the slightest doubt that he told me what he actually knew, but that was not much. The only point worth noting is that Latour was firmly convinced that the Crown Prince had committed suicide, a conviction which was shared to the full by the tutor of the older sons of the Archduchess Marie Valerie, Doctor Schmalzhofer, a man who was extremely well-informed about everything occurring in the imperial family. In confirmation of this opinion Doctor Schmalzhofer said that it was early in the morning of January 30, 1889, that the Crown Prince tried to kill himself just as his valet Loschek was entering his room. As Loschek tried to prevent him from carrying out his intention Rudolph did not succeed in killing himself with the first shot he fired. He had to fire several times before he killed himself, after a desperate struggle with his servant. This, said Doctor Schmalzhofer, was the explanation of the severe head wounds which were actually found on the corpse.

Frau Schratt told me the same thing in conversation many

years later and added that Marie Vetsera, immediately after her last meeting with the Crown Prince, had taken poison and thus died a few hours before Rudolph. This last piece of information is absolutely accurate. The Emperor's physician, Doctor Kerzl, told me that on the morning of January 30, it was proved beyond doubt by the doctors who were summoned that Marie Vetsera had died several hours before the Crown Prince.

The other versions which I have heard from time to time materially conflict with this one.

After this little diversion I will return to the topic of my conversation with Latour.

As I have already said, Latour knew none of the important details of the drama of Mayerling, but he told me a good deal that was interesting about its preliminaries.

According to him, the wife of Bruck, the opera singer (she had been divorced by Count George Larisch), played a not unimportant part. She was a daughter of the Archduke Ludwig of Bavaria, eldest brother of the Empress Elizabeth, by his morganatic marriage with Henriette Mendel who was subsequently made Baroness Wallersee.

The Empress had a particularly strong affection for her niece who was not only gifted and beautiful but an outstandingly good horsewoman, a point which meant much to the Empress Elizabeth. In fact, such was her affection that the Baroness, a very ambitious woman, gradually began to hope to find herself the wife of the Crown Prince.

Such an idea, which could only seem utterly preposterous to the imperial court, was very soon knocked out of her head, by the Empress as much as anyone else, but to make assurance doubly sure Elizabeth began to set about getting her niece married, as her inordinate ambitions were making her somewhat dangerous. After some time the Empress was successful, as a young and brilliant cavalry officer, Count George Larisch, turned up and duly married the new peril to the preservation

of the dynastic purity of the imperial house. Thus the lady in question did not realize her dream of standing at the Crown Prince's side, though she was received with open arms in the highest society of Vienna as the avowed favourite of the Empress. And in any case Countess George Larisch had thus gained her main object of maintaining relations with the court, and that officially.

" When the Crown Prince married the Belgian Stephanie a few years later," continued Latour, " the disappointed, intriguing and jealous Countess George Larisch made it her business in life to force the pair apart as soon as possible. That the marriage was not taking a happy course she soon found out. She devoted herself to discovering some sore point through which she could estrange Rudolph and Stephanie. It was not so easy at first. Patience and perseverance were necessary. Nor was Countess Larisch the kind of woman to set about her task with blunt directness. She brought a certain cat-like cunning to the realization of her schemes and she did not relax her efforts until at length her reward for her devilish work seemed at hand. At the Polish Ball in Vienna at Shrovetide, 1887, the Baroness Marie Vetsera, a radiant beauty of nineteen, was introduced to the Crown Prince. Her rare attractions at once made the deepest impression upon him. Probably for the first time in his life the Crown Prince had found his *coup de foudre*.

Without losing a moment Countess Larisch set to work. The long-desired moment had at length arrived. It was at her house that the Crown Prince's meetings with Baroness Vetsera took place. After these secret relations had lasted about a year Rudolph decided—probably after great and continuous pressure from the Baroness—to throw away all his rights and honours, not to mention his future prospects, and marry her. With a view to getting his marriage with Stephanie dissolved he first applied to Pope Leo XIII. The latter had no alternative but to refer the matter for decision

to the Emperor Francis Joseph. Utterly unprepared, the Emperor was absolutely astounded by the Pope's revelations. Overwhelmed with grief and rage he summoned the Crown Prince to his presence and told him in terrible agitation and with brutal candour that on no condition would he sanction such insane behaviour. The Emperor was so deeply affected by the Crown Prince's preposterous request that after this talk with his son he had a bad fainting fit and it was with considerable difficulty that he could be brought round. That was probably towards the end of January, 1889, and on the thirtieth the Crown Prince's love affair came to its ghastly end in the "tragedy of Mayerling."

That was the last time I discussed this subject with Latour.

Where would the Hapsburg Empire be now if the Crown Prince had lived and taken a more serious view of the obligations his high position involved ? In this affair, as in so many others, that mysterious evil fate which ever dogged the Emperor's steps played a large part.

I never realized the full scale of this horrible tragedy until I came to speak of the Crown Prince in those talks with General Middleton to which I have previously referred.

On our walks in the Lauffen Wald at Ischl he told me that he had never ceased to blame the Crown Prince for his scandalous mode of life, particularly when it went so far as in the case of Baroness Vetsera.

I endeavoured to find a certain measure of excuse in the fact that—as I was told—the Countess George Larisch had designedly enticed him into a trap when she arranged his meetings with Marie Vetsera at her house.

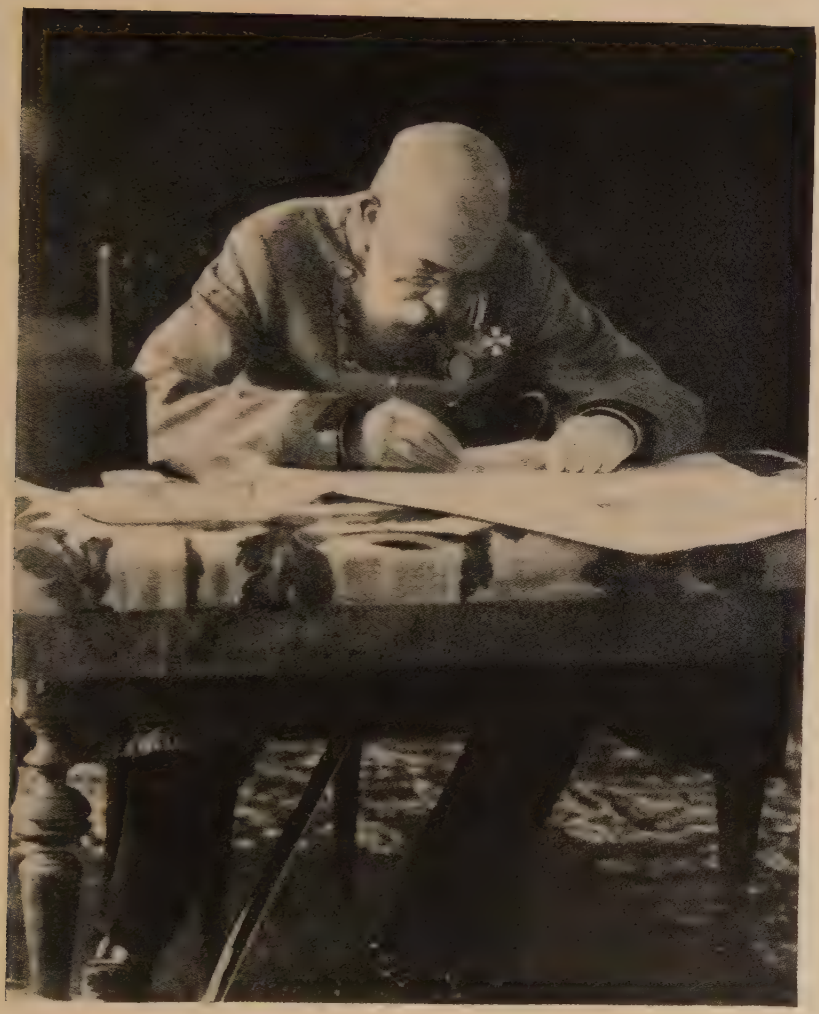
"There's no truth in that," Middleton snapped. "I know better. The Crown Prince's relations with the Baroness really began in England. There's no secret about it because it's associated with an incident which caused a most unpleasant scandal at the British court.

"For Queen Victoria's fifty-year jubilee, in June, 1887,

it was intended that the Emperor of Austria and his wife should be represented in London by the Crown Prince Rudolph and the Crown Princess Stephanie. A short time before, however, Marie Vetsera went to visit her sister who lived in England. It strikes me as more than probable that she did so because she could meet Rudolph more frequently and less conspicuously in a foreign country than was possible in Vienna. I don't know how Stephanie got to know that the Baroness had gone to England, but she obstinately refused to accompany the Crown Prince for the jubilee festivities. Prayers and entreaties were of no avail. The Emperor and Empress's efforts had no effect nor had those of the King and Queen of Belgium who were also expected in London. Stephanie would have nothing to do with Queen Victoria's jubilee. The Queen regarded it as an unforgivable insult and in addition the unhappy differences between the Crown Prince and his wife attained the widest publicity. Rudolph was extremely enraged at his wife's behaviour and ultimately travelled to England alone. There he met Baroness Vetsera, who urged him to get rid of Stephanie once and for all. In any case the absent are always in the wrong, and here the absent one was the Crown Prince's wife. After this visit of Rudolph to London their marriage, which in any case was then only a formality, was hopelessly shattered."

When I cautiously tried to bring the conversation round to the Crown Prince's tragic end Middleton at once took up the topic and remarked in his blunt way—probably not without a large measure of truth—that the most interesting thing about Rudolph had been his death. "There's nothing very noteworthy about his life," said the English general caustically.

Middleton was fairly well-informed on the subject of the Crown Prince's death inasmuch as the Empress Elizabeth had told him a good deal about it during her visits to France. One of the peculiarities of this usually discreet but not



The Emperor at Work.

[*Facing p.* 96

unapproachable woman was that she would freely discuss the most confidential matters with persons who happened to have won her sympathy for the moment. She did it indiscriminately, as her mood prompted her, with her language professors, her *friseuses*, companions on her walks and rides and occasionally even with servants. She never honoured her official *entourage*—maids of honour, gentlemen in waiting and so forth—with the same candour.

Middleton was one of those with whom the Empress Elizabeth talked without reserve and he acquired a good deal of authentic information through her. What he told me about the Crown Prince's death also had that character.

I was at once struck with the fact that Middleton dismissed the widespread legend of the Crown Prince's suicide as a silly invention. He was emphatic that the Empress always insisted that her only son had been murdered. Middleton could not say who had committed the crime. He only knew that Rudolph had fallen a victim to one of his love affairs.

"*But not his love affair with Marie Vetsera*," he added in an authoritative tone.

This was something quite new and it amazed me not a little.

On the other hand Middleton could not say much in reply to further questions I put to him. He only knew what the Empress had told him—that another love affair was in progress at Mayerling and that it ended with his death on January 30, 1889.

Marie Vetsera's fate had no further interest for Middleton. An oddity like him was totally indifferent to the catastrophe which had given rise to so much talk. When the Empress once spoke to him about the terrible event he had listened, of course, and retained many details in his wonderful memory, but he had not gone so far as to ask any questions. All he knew was that in the stormy discussion between the Emperor

and the Crown Prince on the day before the latter's death, Francis Joseph had definitely forbidden his son to have any further dealings with Marie Vetsera under any circumstances whatever. The Crown Prince bowed to the inevitable, decided to break with Marie Vetsera and wrote to her to that effect. She followed him to Mayerling and tried to win him back by a meeting with him. As this last effort failed she took her own life.

Such was Middleton's account of the events of January 29 and 30, 1889, based on what the Empress had told him.

He added in conclusion that after the Emperor had recovered from the first shock he soon got over the loss of his son, particularly as the autopsy had revealed symptoms of advanced paralysis which in all probability would have carried him off within a year.

The truth of this report was emphatically confirmed in a conversation I subsequently had with the royal physician, Dr. Kerzl. His authority was his predecessor, Hofrat Dr. Baron von Widerhofer, who had conducted the post-mortem, and in so doing made the discovery. When Widerhofer, with not unnatural apprehension, told the Emperor what he had found, to his great surprise the sovereign actually regarded the news in the light of consolation for he simply remarked: "God's ways are inscrutable. Perhaps He has sent me this trial to spare me a yet harder one!"

Middleton can hardly have had very warm feelings for Crown Prince Rudolph, as he concluded with the harsh words: "He lived at far too great a pace, and was a wreck when death carried him off. How could anyone suppose that a man with such a character would lay violent hands on himself. It takes moral courage to commit suicide, particularly when love, which implies deep feelings, is the cause. You'll search in vain for anything like that in Rudolph."

Middleton told me that the Empress Elizabeth on the

other hand was anything but consoled by the post-mortem discovery I have mentioned. It was a bitter grief, intensified a thousand times by the pangs of conscience, because she blamed herself bitterly for not having taken greater care of her beloved son and brought his life back into better paths by keeping him away from the unending round of pleasures and dissipations.

"But could she have done it, poor woman?" reflected Middleton. "That was another's duty, a sacred and imperative duty!"

The old English general was obviously referring to the Emperor Francis Joseph. He certainly held him responsible for much that had happened in his family. The remark may well have enshrined the Empress's view also.

The principal comment on Middleton's revelations was that they were open to the startling, and to me unanswerable, objection that they failed to show any direct connection between the death of the Crown Prince and that of Marie Vetsera. I had never heard his version before and I could not bring myself wholly to accept it.

So much has been said and written about Rudolph's death that it really seems superfluous to return to the matter once more. Most of the many versions which had some claim to be authentic led to the assumption that Rudolph had committed suicide. Such was the official version, though unofficially it was widely reported that he had been murdered either by Marie Vetsera or by one of the guests present at the meeting in the remote hunting-lodge in Lower Austria. The suicide of the Baroness on the other hand had apparently been proved.

But from what gradually came to my ears I am now convinced, and on good grounds, that Rudolph met his death in a quite different way.

I will state shortly how I came to my present opinion.

A few days after the fateful January 30, 1889, my old

friend and schoolmate, Gmeiner, told me that an under-gamekeeper from Mayerling had revealed to him in confidence that the Crown Prince had been found on the morning of January 30 lying in front of the gamekeeper's lodge with a battered skull. He had himself assisted to carry the corpse into the hunting-lodge. Suicide was out of the question, if only because Rudolph had no weapon of any kind with him.

Suspicion at once fell upon the gamekeeper and he vanished without leaving any traces.

As I have already said, the Crown Prince was subsequently never mentioned in court circles. Not before the unveiling of Rudolph's monument in the park at Budapest in the spring of 1910 was any reference made to the departed by members of the court. I was talking on official matters with Count Ludwig Apponyi, the Hungarian Grand Chamberlain, and he began to discuss the small and unpretentious monument representing the Crown Prince in hunting dress. I happened ever so casually to mention Gmeiner's version of the tragedy. I was immediately amazed by the impression my words made on the Count, who was usually courtesy itself, and the perfect type of the purely conventional and self-possessed courtier. He stared at me like a lunatic and it was some time before he recovered himself sufficiently to ask me whether I believed that version myself. When I replied that I was almost tempted to accept it, he burst out :

" Well, it's the solemn truth ! But keep it to yourself. We had it straight from a member of the hunting staff at Mayerling immediately after the Crown Prince's death."

I ventured to suggest that I could not altogether reconcile this version with Marie Vetsera's presence in Mayerling and her death there. Count Apponyi admitted this gap in the story, but thought that it was bridged by the assumption that the gamekeeper had been employed by the Baroness to commit the murder. The Count seemed to know nothing further, but regarded it as probable that it was only after Rudolph

had paid his last account that Marie Vetsera had voluntarily taken her own life. He maintained that she was an exceptionally excitable and ambitious woman, whose vanity had been deeply wounded so that she was quite capable of the deed.

I confess I did not regard Apponyi's conclusion as convincing. A link was missing in the chain.

It was quite a short time ago, two years after the destruction of the Hapsburg Empire, that chance brought me new light on this affair, which had hitherto remained to a large extent shrouded in darkness.

Rear-Admiral Ludwig Ritter von Höhnel, well known as an explorer, who had been one of the Emperor's Aides-de-Camp at the beginning of the century, told me the following story. I can give the most complete assurances that he had it from people whose credibility both he and I regard as absolutely beyond suspicion.

Count Hoyos—one of the few witnesses of the Mayerling drama—immediately after January 30, 1889, wrote to a near relation in Hungary about the Crown Prince's death, and gave a detailed description of the circumstances. He recorded in black and white the fact that on the fatal day Rudolph was lying with a battered skull in the snow in front of the gamekeeper's lodge at Mayerling. It was exactly as the under-gamekeeper had said and Count Ludwig Apponyi had believed.

But this letter shed a good deal more light on the context. It appears that the Crown Prince had established relations some time previously with the young and attractive wife of the gamekeeper. She was known as a great beauty. The man was extremely jealous and simply would not tolerate the association. He accordingly gave Rudolph several warnings, but all in vain. On the fatal night he found the Crown Prince in his house and at once settled accounts with him. Rudolph came to a miserable end. His corpse was thrown out into the snow in front of the lodge and remained there till it was found next morning.

There were several witnesses to the carrying of the body to the hunting-lodge. The under-gamekeeper I have mentioned, Gmeiner's contemporary, was one of them.

I must add that a day or two after the letter in question reached the addressee she received a telegram from Count Hoyos imploring her in God's name to reveal the contents of the letter to no one, and destroy it at once. This request was followed by a letter to the same effect, and it was stated that the reason was on the Emperor's express orders.

But it was already too late. Several persons—including, presumably, Count Apponyi—already knew what was in the letter.

On the morning of January 30, 1889, there was another corpse in the hunting-lodge at Mayerling. It was the corpse of Marie Vetsera.

What was to be said about her death ? Was it not directly connected with that of the Crown Prince ?

However extraordinary it may seem the answer is in the negative. It is true that both Rudolph and Marie Vetsera died at approximately the same time. Yet it would appear more than questionable whether the Crown Prince ever knew of the Baroness's suicide. The latter *undoubtedly* never heard of Rudolph's end as the medical evidence proved conclusively that her death preceded his by several hours.

General Middleton was thus perfectly right that there was no connection between the two deaths.

With the help of what has been said it becomes easy to reconstruct, at any rate hypothetically, the course of events on the 29th and 30th January, 1889.

After receiving his father's emphatic refusal to consent to the proposed marriage with Marie Vetsera, the affair was all over for the Archduke Rudolph. He probably laid the situation frankly before the Baroness and thought he would be doing her a kindness by disappearing for the moment from her immediate neighbourhood. Hence his flight to

Mayerling. The choice of this particular spot was doubtless influenced by the presence there of the gamekeeper's wife, who has been described by Count Hoyos as a striking and unusual figure. Here, then, was an opportunity for diversion and change which would appeal to the well-known cynicism of the Crown Prince.

That Marie Vetsera should hurry to Mayerling after the Crown Prince for a last meeting must have been very vexatious for him. In any case the final parting took place, after which the Baroness probably withdrew to one of the rooms in the castle she had occupied on previous visits and committed suicide.

After the interview the Crown Prince did not trouble his head further about Marie Vetsera. He lost no time in seeking the side of the beautiful wife of the keeper, having already deliberately sent the husband off on some hunting errand, which was designed to keep him away from the lodge for some hours. In Count Hoyos' letter to which I have referred this last detail is emphasized. It appears, however, that the gamekeeper did not follow the Crown Prince's instructions, but remained near the house watching until the Archduke Rudolph appeared. He stopped him and the Archduke met his death.

Thus a higher dispensation had found Marie Vetsera an avenger without any effort of her own.

But the wrong that Rudolph was committing immediately before his death against his wife, the Archduchess Stephanie, was a much more serious one.

With his unfailing chivalry the Emperor showed every attention to the widow of his only son, even after she became the wife of Count Elemer Lonyay, although he not only disapproved of this marriage but regarded it almost as an insult to the imperial house.

In the autumn of 1903, when Stephanie lay ill for months at the Hôtel Imperial in Vienna, the Emperor was as solicitous

in his inquiries as if she had been a member of his family. He sent her doctors, medicines and food from the imperial kitchens and several times visited her personally. When she recovered his delight was unmistakable.

When Countess Stephanie Lonyay came to Vienna she was always invited to the imperial table, where, on one occasion, I was surprised to observe—for she now no longer ranked as Crown Princess—that the Emperor gave her the place at his right hand. He honoured in her the memory of the long-dead son whose name was now never so much as mentioned.

Crown Prince Rudolph was a peculiar kind of meteor. He shot up swiftly into the sky and then suddenly vanished long before the time for descent had come. Of the three children of the Emperor who survived early childhood he was the only one who resembled his mother. This resemblance was not only external, for he had inherited her beautiful, clear-cut features, but he also had her mental gifts. From the Empress Elizabeth came his exceptional intelligence, clear, alert shrewdness and his highly developed aptitude for art and science. If only he had combined with these qualities his father's iron sense of duty!

Unfortunately, however, his mother's restless blood pulsed through his veins.

This is how he was described to me by the chaplain of the royal castle in Budapest, Abbot Kanter, who knew the Crown Prince well, heard much about him in Vienna and had taken a special interest in his career. Kanter wished to publish a monogram on the Crown Prince Rudolph with the object of making his future plans known to posterity, or rather to show what would have been the future development of the Austro-Hungarian Empire if the career of the Crown Prince had not come to an untimely end. But even Kanter saw that he would be faced with great difficulties as he really knew very little—like everyone else with whom I have talked about

the Crown Prince—about Rudolph's political programme or views on such matters. I am inclined to believe that such a programme did not exist because the Crown Prince did not take much interest in political questions. He was unfortunately not encouraged by his father to devote himself to affairs which it is important for a crown prince to understand. He accordingly took the line of least resistance and left them severely alone.

It was Abbot Kanter's opinion that Rudolph's great misfortune had been the lack of anyone to set him on his feet again from time to time and force him, by fair means or foul, to realize his obligations as heir to the throne. Neither the Emperor nor Empress, and least of all the Archduchess Stephanie, played the part. The worst feature of all was that the Crown Prince, at first unwittingly, but later habitually, gathered round himself a band of associates whose influence was fatal at an age when he should have been educating himself earnestly and purposefully for the great position he was to fill.

In this Abbot Kanter's view coincided with that of Lieutenant-General von Latour.

Von Latour held Rudolph's friends in military circles responsible for his undoing; Kanter, on the other hand, blamed his scientific friends and particularly his publicist and journalist associates.

The misguided tactics of the Crown Prince's *entourage* were to plunge him into a sea of pleasure and there drown him. The Archdukes always found gay companions, who would share their debauches, more congenial than serious-minded, conscientious men who reminded them of irksome duty and dignity. It always ended in the repulse of the sound elements whenever the others were at hand, and the latter remained masters of the situation.

We must not overlook the ease with which all the pleasures of life were placed within the reach of the Archdukes. Apart

from money, which was at their disposal in abundance, there were many circles of society which regarded it as an honour to draw in the princes, even at the expense of propriety and decency. Thus the way was cleared for the most unblushing and unprecedented libertinism.

According to Kanter there was yet another circumstance to be considered in judging Crown Prince Rudolph. Rudolph's aversion to religion was imputed by Kanter to the influence of the freemasons. This, he thought, was exerted through the men with whom the Crown Prince came into contact in connection with his scientific studies and the publication of his work.

Certainly the Crown Prince associated himself with some very questionable people in the course of his literary activities, but the warnings of genuine well-wishers were of no avail, for he would not allow any interference with his intercourse with such people and when they appealed to him these relations developed into intimacy. This, Kanter argued, led to the Crown Prince's atheism, and finally to epicurean views of life. The man to help him to the unrestrained satisfaction of all his desires was not long in presenting himself—the Crown Prince's Chamberlain, Admiral Count Bombelles. This man showed a masterly capacity for flinging open to the Prince all the doors of worldly distraction and even crime. Now restraint was thrown to the winds ; the Prince plunged headlong into all possible and impossible adventures while Count Bombelles played the rôle of Mephistopheles to perfection. He is the man, Kanter maintained repeatedly, who has the tragedy of the Crown Prince on his conscience. This the Emperor realized, but alas, much too late. Bombelles' name ever after was odious to the Emperor.

Doctor Schmalzhofer told me the following anecdote in this connection :

When the Archduchess Marie Valerie wished to appoint a near relative of the Admiral as her lady-in-waiting, the

Emperor consented, but could not refrain from saying, when Countess Bombelles presented herself before him :

" The Archduchess has chosen you as her lady-in-waiting, and I have acceded to her wish. You will realize, however, what self-restraint it costs me to have anyone of your name at my court again."

There can be no manner of doubt that a heavy burden of responsibility rests on the shoulders of Count Bombelles, inasmuch as he enticed the Crown Prince into paths—or at any rate did not keep him from them—which ultimately led to excesses that everywhere undermined the reputation of the imperial house.

It must be admitted of course that in earlier times not all the members of this ancient family had been paragons of virtue ; but outwardly, at any rate, they always made an effort to preserve their dignity and observe the necessary decorum in their pleasures. The Archduke Rudolph, however, considered such restraint quite unnecessary. He fell low in his search for amusement and paid no regard whatever to public opinion. Indeed he, so to speak, struck it in the face daily and from all that I have heard in very well-informed quarters he regarded that as the very thing to give his adventures a real spice.

Such behaviour does not go unpunished.

How is the public to bring itself to regard a man whom it sees wallowing shamelessly in low and vulgar passions with the respect and reverence due to one who stands at the summit of the social pyramid ? An heir to the throne should never expose his future subjects to such a mental conflict. If he does he is himself blindly laying the axe to the tree of the monarchical principle—a principle which the modern spirit has already undermined not a little. He is himself setting fire to the house bequeathed to him by his forefathers as the most precious of inalienable possessions.

Such wanton behaviour can only be branded as a crime,

and of that crime the Crown Prince Rudolph and his voluntary and involuntary accomplices were unquestionably guilty.

To return to Abbot Kanter, I should add that in his talks about the Crown Prince he did not forget the Emperor's inadequacy in all that specially concerned the members of his household. Even in the case of his own son he thought he had done all that was necessary when he had made the traditional cut-and-dried appointments of teachers and tutors, together with the usual number of adjutants and household officials appointed on much the same lines. Even in these details, so important both to himself and his son, the Emperor was unable to rise above the stereotyped bureaucratic tradition, completely overlooking the fact that in such questions the human element is all-important. This unfortunately the Emperor disregarded and so failed to check Rudolph's downward course in time. When at last, much too late, he began to realize what he had done, he again adopted the characteristic course of simply avoiding all reference to the matter, which was unpleasant to him and might disturb his plans.

" By this I do not mean," Kanter continued his argument, " that there would not in any case have been serious friction between the Emperor and the Crown Prince, particularly when the latter's matrimonial difficulties began to grow acute. There were often momentary sparks, but as a rule, the Emperor refrained from probing beneath the surface, for fear of coming upon festering wounds. For this the Crown Prince had to pay."

But even this ascetic and godly priest thought that the Crown Prince's fate called rather for sympathy than condemnation, especially as he finally paid for his mistakes with man's most treasured possession, life.

Sentiments like these, based on the lofty principles of " In omnibus charitas," are to many more appropriate than those expressed in the following melancholy English poem

which appealed to Mrs. de la Touffe-Lauder, who drew my attention to it in this connection :

" Sleep, my Belovëd, sleep !
Be patient !—we shall keep
Our secret closely hid
Beneath the coffin-lid,—
There is no other place in earth or air
For such a love as ours, or such despair !
And neither hell nor heaven shall care to win
Our loathëd souls, rejoicing in their sin ! "

CHAPTER V

FRANCIS FERDINAND

WHEN the Emperor Francis Joseph was robbed of his only son by the Mayerling tragedy on January 30, 1889, his next brother, the Archduke Charles Louis, became heir to the throne. He was in his fifty-sixth year, having been born on July 30, 1833.

In view of the slight difference in age between the Archduke and the Emperor all eyes were inevitably fixed on Charles Louis' eldest son, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, then aged twenty-six. It was known, too, that the Archduke Charles Louis had always preferred a retired life to the public gaze and it could properly be assumed that the crown was no inducement and indeed had no particular attraction for him.

With the death of Charles Louis on May 19, 1896, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, in his thirty-third year, became the direct heir. He had thus crossed the threshold of maturity, that stage of a man's life at which the stamp of responsibility and resolution is set upon him. In neither quality was the Archduke deficient.

It was just before this that my chance came of making his personal acquaintance. In June, 1895, I was unexpectedly appointed General Staff Officer of the 38th Infantry Brigade which was then at Budweis in Bohemia under the command of the Archduke. Our direct co-operation was not destined to be of long duration, however, for within a few months the Prince had lung trouble and was compelled to go south

for a considerable time. Our paths did not cross again until five years later when I was serving in the Emperor's military cabinet.

Yet the time at Budweis gave me plenty of opportunity to obtain a pretty good idea of the character of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, not only during our close but not entirely continuous official dealings, but also in the course of conversations I had with him when I was a guest at his table or we went for short drives or walks together.

On our drives he always took the reins himself. He was extremely fond of sitting on the box and was a particularly expert driver. On the other hand, and quite unlike his uncle, he was only a very moderate horseman, and notwithstanding all the years he had spent in the cavalry he was not fond of riding. To be honest, he rode no more than was absolutely necessary.

Francis Ferdinand was serious-minded, but none the less extraordinarily courteous. He had a high notion of his great position and expressed it even in his outward appearance, for he was always particularly well-groomed and smart, whether in uniform, civilian or sporting clothes.

Like the Emperor he was essentially the aristocrat in his speech. He chose his words carefully and well and always did his best to avoid impulsive remarks. Yet he could not entirely control his nerves, so that outbursts of anger were not altogether a rarity with him. He quickly discovered mistakes and failures and would often censure the offenders publicly in language little short of harsh. Nor did he shrink from making examples. If an individual incurred his displeasure he had nothing good to expect from the Archduke. His judgment on those with whom he came in contact was sharp and on the intolerant side. His favour had always to be won first. It was never granted indiscriminately. Yet that did not make him a really sound judge of men, because he was only too easily led by personal sympathies

and antipathies. Nor was he free from a prejudice in favour of aristocracy.

He had certainly worked harder in his youth than his younger brothers, the Archdukes Otto and Ferdinand Charles, but unfortunately he had had no systematic and thorough training. In the imperial family no one had the slightest idea of making the young princes pass through an intensive course of education. It was quite enough for them to acquire a smattering of *ad usum delphini* general knowledge which to a certain extent fitted them to enter upon that military career which was considered the only path to salvation. The system had been applied to Francis Ferdinand also. He soon discovered the many *lacunæ* in his knowledge and endeavoured to fill up the gaps by self-instruction. He displayed no little energy in carrying out this self-imposed task and a considerable measure of success attended his efforts.

As heir to the last Duke of Modena, Francis V., who died on November 20, 1875 and bequeathed his style and title "of Austria-Este" to Francis Ferdinand, the latter found himself possessed of an immense fortune in his early youth. In later years he managed his property and affairs with much care and caution. He used his great wealth partly in building superb residences, and partly in the purchase of art treasures for which, thanks to enthusiasm and long practice, he had a good and well-trained eye. He was a keen, but not always lucky, collector of antiquities and was always trying to excel as a judge of such objects.

In addition to this "craze" (for no other word can be applied to his passion for art treasures), he had another—hunting. Of course it was not hunting in the lofty sense observed by the Emperor Francis Joseph, who always remained the *chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*, even when hunting or shooting.

His knowledge of military matters was good. He was deeply interested in the army and had a real affection for his

men. The best proof was his farewell order to the 38th Infantry Brigade which he drew up and wrote himself. It was much more eloquent of his thoughts and feelings on the subject than any long-winded speech.

One incident, which I have selected from a crowd of others, will set at rest any doubt as to this characteristic of the Archduke.

One fine Sunday in June, 1895, a Sunday on which Francis Ferdinand was out of Budweis, a lance-corporal of the 11th Infantry Regiment (one of the units composing the 38th Infantry Brigade) who had died in hospital was borne to the grave. It so happened that the regimental band had been engaged that very day for some festivity in the neighbourhood, so that there was no music at the funeral as the regulations decreed. The dead man's relatives not unnaturally regarded the omission—which was due solely to this unofficial engagement of the regimental band—as a slight. The matter came to Francis Ferdinand's knowledge. Leaving his work, he immediately went to the barracks of the 11th Infantry Regiment, had the band assembled in the yard and ordered the bandmaster to pick out a "Harmonie."*

He put the "Harmonie" in one corner of the yard and the rest of the regimental band in the other. The latter he ordered to strike up some dance tunes while the "Harmonie" played a funeral march. The tunes went together excellently. All of them were played quite faultlessly. The Archduke now turned angrily to the commanding officer:

"That's what *you* ought to have done! You let the poor corporal go to his last rest without music just to have a few extra bandsmen at a peasants' dance. It's a downright shame!"

It was not long before the officer had to pay for his unfeeling behaviour with the resignation of his commission.

* A few men forming a small band.

Francis Ferdinand took a strong view of his action, which seemed to him pure heartlessness.

The Archduke was invariably true to his feelings of warm regard and interest for his officers and men. They realized its value to them in unsuspected ways during the period in which General von Conrad-Hötzendorf was Chief of the General Staff and made unprecedented demands on the troops, demands almost exceeding the limits of their physical capacity. They found Francis Ferdinand a never-failing stand-by. He simply would not allow the strength of the men and horses to be recklessly dissipated purely for the sake of manœuvres.

The Archduke would also have none of that contempt for any sort of formality in military training which Conrad introduced. With the sound judgment and wealth of experience which the Chief of the General Staff did not possess, he knew that drill and discipline are in many ways absolutely inseparable and that in war a well-drilled unit will do its duty automatically. It was with this idea that he re-introduced the complicated and difficult exercise, " Present Arms," which had been abolished in 1889.

In contrast to the Emperor who knew little about naval affairs and had no particular feeling for the fleet, Francis Ferdinand attached great importance to the navy and devoted special attention to it. As public proof of his interest he often wore naval uniform. The Emperor never did. Francis Ferdinand once asked his uncle in my presence at Ischl why he never gave his naval officers the pleasure of seeing him in their smart uniform. Said the Emperor with a smile :

" In the first place, I've never been given any rank in the navy. Who is there who could have given me one in my time ? Perhaps the Dane, Dahlerup.* Secondly, I'm not

* Hans Bisch, Baron von Dahlerup, Commodore in the Royal Danish Navy, was invited to Austria in 1849 to reorganize the navy. He was created an admiral straight off, in which capacity he commanded the Austrian fleet for a few years.

even capable of managing one of my grandson's paper boats in the fountain here. How on earth could I dress up as an admiral ? "

Francis Ferdinand took the greatest possible interest in politics, read everything in the way of memoranda he could get hold of and always listened most attentively at conferences. I have never come to any final opinion as to whether he thereby acquired a really sound judgment, for here again prejudices and gusts of feeling played too great a part for his views to be always clear. Yet all would admit that he took endless pains to get to the bottom of all questions submitted for his consideration.

As regards foreign politics he was definitely pro-Russian in his Budweis days. He regarded a close association with the Czar's empire as the way of salvation for the future development of the Danube Monarchy, and cherished the greatest hopes that through his personal efforts the young Czar Nicholas II., who at that time had not been long on the throne and was a clean slate, so to speak, would become a real friend of Austria-Hungary. This ambition was confirmed by the fact that the autocratic Russian system was in his eyes an admirable model. At bottom Francis Ferdinand was not merely autocratic by temperament ; in his view it was essential, having regard to the complicated structure and heterogeneous elements of the Danube Monarchy, that its affairs should be directed from above with a strong hand. The result was that more than once he did not hesitate to brand political decisions of the Emperor as expressions of weakness, though the decisions in question were the fruit of the old sovereign's ripe experience and undoubtedly based on grounds of expediency.

Later on Francis Ferdinand found himself bitterly disappointed in Nicholas II. and wasted no time in turning to William II. and King Charles I. of Rumania. In considering his abrupt change of front to the " German " side

it must be remembered that purely personal factors also played a great part, as so often with him.

He had always had a not unfavourable opinion of Italy and never ceased in his honest endeavours to cultivate and gradually strengthen the best of relations with this south-western neighbour. There is no doubt that he proved it in action as well as words. It is only necessary to recall the fact that Francis V. of Modena closed his eyes in the unshakable conviction that the Hapsburgs would one day recover the duchy from which he had had to flee in 1859. The clearest proof is his will which contemplated the maintenance of the Este court which, even though in temporary exile, should always have the closest moral and practical relations with the defunct state of Modena. Francis Ferdinand, on the other hand, once he had attained full age recognized existing facts without any kind of mental reservation. He had not the slightest idea of adopting Francis V.'s point of view. In his eyes the unity of the Italian kingdom was a *fait accompli* and all he desired was to be able to regard Italy as a firm ally of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.

Thus, with a view to avoiding friction, he never wore the insignia of the Italian Order of Nobility, of which he was the Grand Master, in accordance with the last will of Francis V. The Italians might have been offended. Francis Ferdinand regarded his Modena inheritance virtually as private property and he intended to keep all political elements entirely out of it. Was it not he who opposed the strongest resistance to the plans of General Conrad von Hötzendorf in 1907 when the latter was proposing to start his well-known "preventive war?" No one knew it better than I, for I learned it from the Archduke's own lips. He told me himself that he would never give his consent to such a policy of brigandage.

Quite otherwise was Francis Ferdinand's attitude towards

France, in which he saw the principal agent of that decline of Austria which had begun to be revealed even as early as the opening of his uncle's reign. He never made the slightest secret of his aversion to the French, and it is therefore somewhat remarkable that the French themselves, knowing his opinion of them, took no small interest in his doings. They soon became rather apprehensive and kept a close eye on him. That this was not entirely due to pique or fear, but had elements of admiration or respect, is clearly proved by the phrase: "Il sera le Louis XI. de l'Autriche!" which a Frenchman once used. It embodies no slight compliment to the Archduke.

His sympathies with Great Britain were deep and genuine. He was impressed by English life and habits and in many respects the Anglo-Saxons, with their positivism, energy and respect for law and order, had natural affinities with the serious and self-contained character of the Archduke. In the Budweis days it was even said that he was cherishing the vain idea of marrying Princess Mary, the eldest daughter of the then Prince of Wales. One day an autograph letter arrived from Sandringham for him and I took the liberty of asking him whether we had any ground for hoping for his union with Queen Victoria's grand-daughter. The Archduke evaded the question. His answer was neither yes nor no. All he said was:

"It would certainly be high time, if there was any idea of once more increasing the prestige of the Imperial House by suitable marriages and thus rendering the Monarchy a service. But such a marriage—even if possible, which I do not and cannot know—is a matter of such uncertainty that it's better not to think about it."

He lapsed into his serious mood and a deep wrinkle appeared between his eyebrows. He continued in earnest tones:

"But for your own instruction it's worth knowing that

in life things always turn out differently, quite differently, from what one thinks or wishes. Don't forget it!"

His views on the question of domestic politics in the Danube Monarchy culminated in the unshakable conviction that unless fundamental changes were made the Empire was doomed to destruction on the rock of Hungary. He therefore hated Hungary with a blind animosity bordering on sheer obduracy. He was always thinking of possible ways of breaking her political power in future and establishing the state on a totally new basis when he began his reign. He contemplated nothing less than a federation of "small," independent fractions which should each enjoy the widest measure of autonomy in every respect and yet be firmly held together by the bond of an extremely strong central government and a single army. I need hardly say that the official tongue of this Empire would be German, and its representation abroad would also have to be uniform. The model which he had in mind was the constitution of the North American Union. He saw a striking resemblance between it and Austria-Hungary as he insisted that the United States also was not nationally homogeneous.

Personally these plans struck me as somewhat too academic, and I remember shaking my head, involuntarily, when the Archduke was once discussing them. It was one evening in that rainy July of 1895 in which I was often the Archduke's guest at dinner. I gave an account of the conversation on this occasion in a letter I wrote to my father the next day. It is lying before me now and I can thus give exactly what was said.

Quite excited at my dumb expression of doubt, the Archduke exclaimed:

"Do you mean to say it would not be possible to introduce that system over here?"

"Certainly not by legislation alone," I ventured to object.

"Then by force!" replied Francis Ferdinand in gloomy tones.

"Taking isn't stealing," I remarked with a laugh, hoping to give the conversation a lighter turn, as I realized that it was beginning to run on dangerous lines. But I thought it necessary to add: "It seems to me that the foundation for an analogy with the North American Union is lacking in our case. When the United States became an entity in the second half of the eighteenth century it is quite true that it had no history and no settled frontiers. But Washington and his colleagues had one fundamental element at their disposal for their creative work—an element which later formed a foundation and unifying principle for all that followed. I mean Anglo-Saxon civilization, which was not merely predominant but universally recognized as such throughout North America. We have nothing of the kind here."

The Archduke objected: "What about the Germans among us?"

I realized at once that he himself was doubting the force of his argument so I casually answered:

"Before 1866 our Germans failed to prove themselves the dominating and unifying element in the Monarchy, even though they had the strong backing of a virtually absolute government and still possessed a large number of trumps they have long since played. Now that the Monarchy is divided into two parts, in one of which they have ceased to count for practically thirty years and in the other were systematically thrust to the wall throughout the Taaffe era, how could they possibly undertake so formidable a task with any prospect of success? It seems to me simply unthinkable."

For the moment the Archduke, who was obviously not too well pleased, could find nothing more to say but at dinner he returned to the subject and explained in detail how a

transformed Austria-Hungary would have to be formed out of a number of " small " state units of more or less the same area and population.

" When you want to get concrete that will stand anything and last for ever you have to break up the larger stones so that the cement in the mass may, so to speak, weld them all together. It's the same with a federal state. The elements must be equal and similar if the permanence of the whole is to be secured by the unity of the parts and antagonisms are to be avoided. I should like to divide the present Hungary into four or five such elements—Bohemia into two and Galicia into two likewise. If that was done the Germans in Hungary and Bohemia could develop as they have done in their own native Austria. In that way men would come to regard the German language, which was originally imposed on the whole Empire by law on grounds of expediency, as something quite natural and indeed a logical necessity.

" I am absolutely convinced that the disproportionate development of one part of a complex political body such as the Monarchy in its present form can only be at the expense of the other members. It's just like a pathological condition in the human body. If it isn't remedied medicinally, and if need be, surgically, in time it infallibly brings disease and death. In the same way nothing can stay the approach of disaster to a political body like the Hapsburg Monarchy of which one member—Hungary—is always suffering from hypertrophical enlargement. There's no possible doubt about that.

" In my view I'm justified in going so far as to say that the hypertrophy of Prussia is a misfortune even in the German Empire which is nationally homogeneous and from the purely political point of view represents a combination of states on the basis of a historic past. In reality that hypertrophy only enfeebles the whole organism and turns its vital force into false tracks. One fine day this pathological con-

dition will be revealed by some terrible catastrophe—all the more terrible because the disaster might very well come quite unexpectedly so that its consequences would be inevitable and highly destructive."

I listened in amazement to these remarks which sounded so new and strange to me, particularly the reference to Germany which struck me as somewhat absurd. Hitherto, people were never tired of telling me that the greatness of Germany was more than anything else due to the firm leading and predominance of Prussia—the very circumstance Francis Ferdinand described as a "pathological condition!" Yet History has ultimately proved him right on this point, as on so many others!

The Archduke continued this truly ominous conversation even after dinner and approximately outlined the frontiers he had in mind for the individual states of the Hapsburg federation. In these sad days I often think of one remarkable detail of his description. The frontiers which Francis Ferdinand assigned to Hungary in his federation were far more extensive than those she has just received at Neuilly!

When the Archduke returned to this topic, as he did several times subsequently, he expressed another opinion which filled me with no less amazement. He was firmly convinced that the ascendancy of Prussia was a danger not only for the future of Germany but for that of Austria-Hungary also. He based this view on the fact that, though Germany undoubtedly owed her greatness to Prussia, the latter had made that greatness a subject of growing uneasiness to all her neighbours. Francis Ferdinand maintained that this was due to peculiarities of the Prussian character. He thought Austrian hegemony would have been a far sounder guarantee for the progressive and safe development of Germany. The fact that the Austrian statesmen of his day had allowed the leadership of Germany to be wrested from them he regarded as one of the greatest misfortunes that could have overtaken

the two states. He considered that the Chancellor, Prince Clemens Metternich, bore the largest share of responsibility for this development.

" He sacrificed Austria, and therefore Germany, on August 11, 1813," Francis Ferdinand often said, " when he declared war on Napoleon I., as Austria had the destinies of Europe in her hand. In so doing she pulled Prussia's chestnuts out of the fire for her and twisted the rope round her own neck ! "

He always maintained that if Austria had taken the side of Napoleon I. on that occasion, the hegemony of Germany could never have passed out of Hapsburg hands.

The Archduke's opinion of the Emperor Napoleon was quite his own. That he admired him without stint as a great soldier will excite no surprise, but he went further and heatedly rejected the view that he was in any way a usurper.

" There was never a more legitimate sovereign than he ! " the Archduke once remarked. " Didn't the Senate unanimously offer him the crown ? Didn't the subsequent appeal to the people result in a huge majority for him ? Wasn't he anointed by the Pope himself ? What monarch could have a better right to claim that he owed his throne ' to the grace of God and the will of the nation ? ' "

He continued to enlarge on the fact that hardly anyone has ascended a throne with a greater right than Napoleon for by his own efforts he had restored political order, religion and stable social conditions—in a word laid the foundations of mighty modern France. All the great founders of states or dynasties had used more or less reprehensible methods. In many cases they had not shrunk from civil war and crime. Very different was Napoleon's elevation to the throne. " Je n'ai point usurpé la couronne, je l'ai trouvée dans le ruisseau ; le peuple l'a mise sur ma tête ; qu'on respecte ses actes ! "

Such a view of legitimacy, remarkably liberal for an heir

to the Austro-Hungarian throne, may well have roused a suspicion among many who heard similar expressions used by Francis Ferdinand that he attached no particular importance to the unconditional preservation of the old dynasty.

How could an heir harbouring such views breathe the same mental atmosphere as the Emperor who stood by existing institutions for weal or woe? How could the Emperor and Francis Ferdinand possibly work together? It was an absolute impossibility. Such far-reaching divergences of opinion on fundamental questions were bound to keep the two men apart from the start, whether they were called to work together or not.

Of course as the years went by and brought a wealth of experience with them more and more water was poured into the wine of his future political plans. He adopted "Trialism" and ended up—according to post-mortem report—with nothing less than a conversion to "Dualism." But whether that be so or not, I do not think he ever entirely and irrevocably abandoned his original idea.

Towards the end of April, 1913, the draft of a letter which the Archduke had addressed to Count Scapinelli, then Papal Nuncio in Vienna, came casually into my hands. It was perfectly clear from this document how firm was Francis Ferdinand's resolve to preserve and protect the autonomous rights of the different nationalities in the Monarchy—even Hungary. The subject of the letter was the nomination to the newly-established unified-Greek bishopric of Hajdudorog near Debreczin. This bishopric was intended for the Rumanians living in that region, as might be expected in view of the creed concerned, and the Archduke therefore used all his influence to secure that the bishop's chair should be occupied by a member of the higher clergy of Rumanian nationality.

The Hungarian Government, on the other hand, wanted to see a Magyar appointed bishop of Hajdudorog for political

reasons, as through their nominee they could put pressure on the inhabitants to the advantage of Hungary and centralism while he himself acted as their instrument for the magyarization of the province. The Hungarian Minister of Public Worship, through the Emperor, had a Hungarian canon recommended in Rome for the see of Hajdudorog, and the Curia, which always did its utmost to meet the wishes of the Emperor Francis Joseph and his government, especially in the days of Pope Pius X., immediately confirmed the Hungarian candidate for the new diocese.

The Archduke Ferdinand was simply furious. Even at the eleventh hour he intervened personally and tried to impose his view that a prelate of Rumanian nationality was alone suitable for Hajdudorog. Hence the letter of which I am speaking. His language to the Papal Nuncio was quite unusually sharp :

" No one will question that I am a good son of the Church of Rome, but where it is a question of preserving the elementary rights of the nations over whom I may be called to rule, if God so wills, I recognize no considerations of expediency and would not shrink from breaking off relations even with the Holy Father if he used his powers in a direction diametrically opposed to my own views—views which are animated solely by thought for the welfare of my future subjects."

In the case in point Francis Ferdinand did not get his own way, but the incident is eloquent proof that an up-to-date solution of the problem of the nationalities in conformity with the needs of the time was always very much on his mind.

In the following autumn (1913), in the course of a long conversation I had with him at Ischl, he asked me whether I had ever given any further thought to the regeneration of the Monarchy since the Budweis days. I replied in the affirmative. He laughed.

" So have I. I've read and heard much, much too much

about it since then. But I'm not a penny the wiser. It's the sort of problem that's always bobbing up and seems insoluble. I'm sorry to say your old doubts have begun to infect me too!"

After reflection he continued in a tone of resignation:

"I can't resist a feeling that 1866 was a fatality as much for Germany as for us. Prussia, in her selfish hunger for power, sawed off the branch on which we sat. That action spelled the doom of the Hohenzollerns also. Austria was aiming at establishing an ascendancy in Germany on a federal basis, or rather she only wished to be *primus inter pares*. Prussia insists on being feared and obeyed and has always to give ocular proofs of her power and superiority to maintain her authority over the members of the federation. The appeal to arms in that year resulted in a decision against us. That was a misfortune the fatal effects of which will be fully appreciated only in the future.

"The federal constitution which we should have introduced for Germany would obviously have been extended to the Monarchy itself. The federal principle, whose representative we should have been in Germany, would have had to be adopted at home, if only for the sake of logic. It couldn't have been otherwise. Thus Austria, her vigour renewed, would have entered upon new and auspicious paths. I stand or fall by a Hapsburg federal empire. Dualism is madness, a makeshift, an anomaly!"

He shook his head and added:

"It would mean that the Slav problem would solve itself. The Czechs would be separated from the Germans of Bohemia and enjoy autonomy. So would the Croats, the Slovenes and the Hungarian Serbs. Then all these peoples would exercise so strong an attraction—by their very mass—on the Serbs of the Kingdom that the latter would seek national unity within the Monarchy, i.e., in a centripetal sense, and not in a centrifugal sense by the incorporation of

our South Slavs with the Serbs of the Kingdom. And that even though our South Slavs are far superior to the Serbs and Montenegrins from the point of view of culture."

I remarked on the religious differences between Slovenes and Croats on one side and the Serbs on the other. Francis Ferdinand smiled.

"Of course. The Catholics must certainly have priority."

In those words the Archduke himself exposed the Achilles heel of his capacity to unravel this problem. In 1913 a Hapsburg solution was further away than ever as the result of Serbia's gains in territory and influence in the Balkan Wars. Yet Francis Ferdinand possessed both the will and the courage to grapple with the problem. That alone meant a good deal. Nor was his design without prospects of ultimate success. No wonder that the Slav world had its eyes closely fixed upon him, approving or disapproving as party feeling dictated.

The Archduke's closing words were interesting:

"The Emperor has been bitterly reproached on all sides for sacrificing Lombardy in 1859 rather than accept Germany's help after Solferino at the price of allowing Prussia to take over the headship. It was nobility of mind, I tell you. The Emperor had no intention of handing Germany over to Prussia. He foresaw the danger it would mean for Germany. When Königgratz compelled him to cede the hegemony of Germany to Prussia the latter took over, as *beneficium inventarii*, the hostility of France. Prussia knew only too well how to convert that hostility into the antagonism of the whole world.

"Thus Prussia prejudiced that *peaceful* development which Germany still needs to become the mistress of Europe within a measurable time. I have no doubt that she will ultimately do so. At the present moment the German Empire hardly has one rival. England is perhaps the only possible one. But England has other missions owing to her

insular position and her overseas interests, so that it seems to me Germany could probably come to some understanding with her. That should not be very difficult.

"France on the other hand was overthrown on the battlefields of 1870 and 1871 and hitherto Russia has not been capable of action in a cultural sense. Thus the way to the hegemony of Europe is now open for Germany. The German spirit is certainly on that track and pursues it relentlessly, methodically and with an unflagging energy one cannot but admire.

"Unfortunately that is not enough for the mentality of Prussian imperialism. With its 'force-your-way' system it drives the Germans forward ruthlessly without ever reflecting that they may strike some brick wall against which it is useless for them to knock their heads, though they might pick their way through it if they had patience enough. The latter alternative means time, perhaps a good deal of time. The question is whether Prussia will give Germany that time in view of the fact that her evolution is approaching its climax? It can only be a matter of ten years or so before Germany reaches her goal. The essential thing is to avoid a conflagration in Europe during that period. It must be Germany's business to avert such a conflict if she doesn't want to be not only permanently thwarted in her steady rise, but possibly hurled at one fell swoop from the heights she has already climbed at such a cost in effort. Do Prussia's policy and behaviour as Germany's mistress enable us to hope that she will give the Germans the time they require for the full development of their powers. Hardly. You wait and see!"

Through all vicissitudes the Archduke never abandoned his idea of a federal constitution for the Monarchy. As I have already said the fact that he cherished such plans, and was not to be moved from his standpoint, was bound from the outset to estrange him from so strong a conservative as the old Emperor. Unfortunately an event occurred which alienated the nephew from his uncle once and for all just at

the time when Francis Joseph was getting over the loss of his only son, thanks to the healing hand of time, and probably was only too anxious to have Francis Ferdinand, the Crown Prince Rudolph's successor, at his right hand as the help and support he needed so badly. However great their efforts to conceal the fact, at any rate from the outside world, from now onwards there was a gulf between them which could no longer be bridged.

In the beginning of the nineties Francis Ferdinand had made the acquaintance of Countess Sophie von Chotek, a maid of honour to the Archduchess Isabella, wife of the Archduke Frederick in whose house he met her. He immediately announced his intention of making her his wife.

This was a terrible blow to the Emperor.

At first the idea of obtaining his consent to the morganatic marriage of the heir to the throne, of all men, was utterly unthinkable. For years the Emperor used all the resources at his command in his stubborn resistance to what seemed to him the Archduke's monstrous proposal. It was only when he realized that his opposition was probably only confirming Francis Ferdinand in his innate and obstinate determination to let nothing turn him from his fatal project that the old sovereign gave his consent to the morganatic marriage of his nephew and heir, albeit with heavy heart.

On the other hand the Archduke had expressly to renounce the succession for his issue, and renounce it solemnly and without any kind of mental reservation. He did so at the Hofburg on June, 28, 1900, but not before he had made the most strenuous but vain efforts, through the medium of Court dignitaries, legal experts and above all Dr. von Körber (the Austrian Minister-President, who was in high favour with the Emperor), to get the conditions modified. Thereupon (on July 1) he brought Countess Sophie Chotek, already thirty-two years of age and created Princess von

The Emperor Francis Joseph on his Deathbed.

[*Facing p.* 128

Hohenberg the same day, home as his bride to the Castle of Reichstadt.

The marriage was certainly a happy one in itself, but it unquestionably put Francis Ferdinand in a difficult position for the Princess, a woman of high intelligence, was extraordinarily ambitious, resolute, and yet vain and had not the slightest intention of accommodating herself to the position of a morganatic wife kept carefully in the background. On the contrary she bent every nerve, with a zeal which was not always coupled with the necessary tact—especially after she had presented her husband with a daughter and two sons—to assert her full rights as the wife of the heir to the throne.

Sophie Hohenberg herself was the last to repudiate the suggestion. She once betrayed her aspirations to me, though indirectly, in a way which could not be misunderstood.

When the Emperor was travelling to Reichenberg in June 1906 to visit the exhibition there, he had the royal train stopped at Beneschau as the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife had come down to the station from the neighbouring castle of Konopischt to greet him. The Emperor descended from his saloon and talked for some time with his nephew and the Princess of Hohenberg. During the conversation it was obvious to any close observer that the aged monarch was anything but at his ease in talking to the Princess.

When the train proceeded on its way several members of the Emperor's suite began to discuss the rôle Sophie Hohenberg might one day play when Francis Ferdinand ascended the throne and there were many expressions of dismay and apprehension at the prospect. Count Paar tried to dispel their fears. Speaking entirely in accordance with his own convictions, he said :

" What have we to fear from the Princess ? She'll only be what Countess Mirafiori was to King Victor Emmanuel II. ! No more and no less ! What harm did Countess Mirafiori

do her royal husband? Did *she* upset his court? Was *she* the cause of any difficulties in Italy? None that I know of! You hardly ever saw or heard anything of her, and it'll be the same with Sophie Hohenberg."

This remark of the old General which was certainly not unkindly meant must have come somehow to the Princess of Hohenberg's ears. I found out how she took it and indeed stored it up in her memory from a sharp remark she let fall in a talk I had with her the following winter on quite different topics. She remarked, looking me straight in the face and quite casually: "I hear Count Paar has compared me with Countess Mirafiori, but I think he's forgotten that I'm of very different birth and have had a very different education from that of Countess Mirafiori. The comparison won't hold. Indeed it's no slight insult to me. You can tell Count Paar so. I'm no Countess Mirafiori, and devoutly hope I never shall be!"

When I told Count Paar, he replied; "I've done for myself now with the Hohenberg, it's all up with me as far as she's concerned. But at any rate it's opened my eyes as to what the woman's really thinking about. I know from her own lips, so to speak, that she's aiming high, as high as ever she can!"

These conditions were likely to cause fresh and highly regrettable political complications in the Danube Monarchy which had already more than enough difficulties to cope with. It was exactly what the Emperor himself had feared. He had put these feelings into words when his consent to the marriage had at length been wrung from him:

"It seems I'm to be spared nothing on this earth!"

I once had a long conversation on the subject of Sophie Chotek with Dr. Godfried Marschall, the suffragan Bishop of Vienna who for years was a familiar figure in the Archduke Charles Ludwig's house and was extremely well informed about the private affairs of the Imperial family. His feelings

were so strong that he ended up by roundly asserting that the Emperor made the greatest mistake in the whole of his life when he allowed this morganatic marriage.

"You see if Sophie Hohenberg doesn't in time persuade the Archduke to clear the way to the throne for her children!"

Marschall went on to say in disconsolate tones that the Emperor must have anticipated such complications and that it was nothing less than foolish of him to play ostrich once more and be satisfied by a few legal formulæ. It meant washing his hands in innocency or resigning himself to the far from comforting idea: "After us the deluge!" The Archduke should either have made his decision in favour of his wife and been compelled to renounce all his rights once and for all, or he should have remained the heir and had to give up his marriage with Sophie Chotek. There was no middle course in affairs of this kind. The stakes are too high.

When I remarked that this point of view seemed to me somewhat too extreme, the bishop, usually the kindest and mildest of men, waxed quite furious and contemptuous:

"It's always the same with our royalties! They're tremendous sticklers for their prerogatives but don't bother a bit about the duties inseparably associated with them!"

Dr. Marschall angrily referred me to the rules obtaining at other courts and the particular case of Prince Oskar of Sweden who was not an heir to the throne but had had, as Count Bernadotte, to live in exile in England with his wife, Ebba Munk, a lady of noble family. He had been forced to renounce his rank as a royal prince on account of his marriage.

"What are the Bernadottes compared with the Hapsburgs? Not to be mentioned in the same breath! Yet King Oskar II., himself an old man, took the right view of the matter and was strong enough to get his own way. Our old Emperor

could do neither and you may take it from me that we shall pay for it heavily before we've finished."

I thought I could answer so severe a verdict with doubt as to the Archduke's intention of securing the throne for his children. I said I knew that the Archduke was much too honourable and too good a Catholic to break the oath he had sworn on the Bible. I also thought that the rumours of Sophie Hohenberg's insatiable ambition were exaggerated and malevolent; in short, that nothing particularly dreadful need be expected from her.

"That's where you're wrong, badly wrong," Bishop Marschall interrupted in excitement. "The woman's ambition is unbridled and her unusual intelligence will soon show her the way to translate it into fact. It's a downright piece of luck that we don't know all that's going on in her head, but the best proof that she's aiming high is the fact that she is always proclaiming, *urbi et orbi*, that a mission of the greatest importance to the Monarchy has been entrusted to her! Indeed, she goes so far as to say that Providence has assigned to her personally a great mission for the Hapsburg Empire!"

This proud claim of the Duchess of Hohenberg was destined to be realized only too soon, but not in the sense in which she meant it. In actual fact one of the greatest and most terrible missions for the Danube Monarchy was reserved for her—nothing less than to be the immediate cause of the downfall and destruction of the venerable Hapsburg Empire!

Such was the situation as regards the Archduke Francis Ferdinand from that time forward. How could the Emperor be expected to accept it? And yet he did so ultimately, though very slowly and gradually, and only because his growing consciousness of age and natural pliability made any other course impossible in the long run.

Francis Ferdinand, who was certainly more alive to the internal progressive changes in the Empire than the Emperor

–essentially the product of another era—gradually tended to take much of the business of government out of the latter's hands.

In transacting such business there was one thing about the Archduke which put him above all other Hapsburgs, not excluding the Emperor himself.

He had cut loose from the " minutes and memoranda " method of treating State business which had been peculiar to the Emperor. He did not wait for matters to be brought to his notice, but attacked problems on his own initiative. He had an open mind and boldly faced the new questions which arose in the Danube Monarchy, or seemed likely to affect its relations with foreign powers. He personally invoked the advice of those he thought competent to give it and in doing so had no regard for the limits of departmental authority but appealed to intelligence and experience wherever he could find them, whether in or out of office.

This system, worked by an intellect so disciplined as that of Francis Ferdinand, must have produced excellent results if he had been spared to take his uncle's place.

The credit of having placed him on this higher pedestal and given him his width of outlook must be given mainly to Major Alexander von Brosch-Aarenau, who was his aide-de-camp for many years. Brosch-Aarenau was also the originator of the Archduke's military cabinet, which developed from a small personal staff to one of the most important parts of the state machinery of Austria-Hungary. Even when Brosch-Aarenau handed over the direction of Francis Ferdinand's military cabinet to his successor, Colonel Bardolff of the General Staff, a man pre-eminent for his unusual gifts, the Archduke did not hesitate frequently to take Brosch's opinion. He always corresponded freely with him and occasionally invited him even to conferences. These conferences not only gave Francis Ferdinand unprejudiced information as to the tendencies and movements of the day

but brought him many most helpful suggestions. Their value was all the greater as they enlarged the Archduke's outlook while the Emperor only too readily buried himself in details and trivialities and thus not infrequently could not see the wood for the trees.

That being the case, Francis Ferdinand's co-operation would have been of great value to the old Emperor and unsuspected advantages might have flowed from it. That things turned out otherwise is greatly to be regretted. Emperor and Heir Presumptive worked on lines which diverged rather than converged.

From 1906 the Archduke was undeniably gaining the upper hand even in military affairs, and it would be unjust to overlook the fact that the belated reorganization of the army and the fleet, as yet only half completed, was his work and must be placed to his credit as an important service.

Even here there could be no question of fruitful co-operation between the Emperor and the Heir. The reason was that the Archduke, naturally reserved and goaded by his domineering wife into an attitude of opposition even in matters of small importance, avoided rather than sought continuous or even frequent contact with the sovereign. He kept to his own path along which his problems and plans were at first allowed to travel at will. If in the decisive phase they clashed with the Emperor's orders, then and not till then would the Archduke demand, sometimes personally, sometimes by letter, the consideration of his views and wishes. As a rule the aged Emperor would as far as possible fall in with the Archduke's proposals; by no means willingly but rather after the manner of those overworked, weary husbands who shrink from every household difficulty with a helpless, "Anything for a quiet life."

Although the wound inflicted on the Emperor by Francis Ferdinand's marriage never healed but rather continued to spread and fester, after a time he began to meet the Princess

of Hohenberg occasionally, and she received the title of Duchess and was styled "Highness." The Duchess attached great importance to being seen in public at the Emperor's side, on which occasions she eagerly snapped up every word he addressed to her. Meanwhile she worked hard and purposefully to strengthen her personal position and allowed nothing to divert her progress up the somewhat slippery ladder that one day was to bring her to the level of complete equality with her husband.

The practical results of these fevered efforts, scarcely visible on the surface but secretly straining to the utmost every nerve of the Duchess of Hohenberg, at last became apparent. They became publicly noticeable when she succeeded in accompanying the heir to the Courts of Saxony, Rome and finally Germany, where—to please the Archduke—she was received with every honour. It was well known in Berlin that there was no surer way than this to the heart of Francis Ferdinand, and the German Court acted in its own interest in adopting this attitude without bothering its head about the morganatic business.

It cannot be wondered at that there was no lack of bitter comment and sneering behind the Duchess's back. I was informed, almost officially, that the present Queen of Rumania let it be understood in no uncertain fashion that there is a vast difference between the morganatic wife of the heir to a throne and one of equal birth, especially when the latter can claim direct descent from the reigning houses of Russia and England. With the best of intentions Princess Marie, as she was then, could not resist this snub.

In spite of all, however, the Duchess of Hohenberg was quite unable to follow up at home her hard-won success abroad; in Austria she could not carry off her rôle of "*Erzherzogin zur linken Hand*." The people of the Dual Monarchy—with the exception of a few isolated approaches in which the underlying egoistic motives were obvious—had

no sympathy with the Duchess. With that unerring instinct in these matters which is so peculiarly characteristic of the masses, they could see in her only an intruder in the ancient royal house. The gradually spreading rumour that the Duchess was miserly, bigoted and harsh towards her household staff, further contributed to make both Austria and Hungary disinclined to sympathize with her ambitions.

Then came an unexpectedly favourable opportunity for her to present herself to the people as the wife of the heir, an opportunity at which Sophie Hohenberg eagerly snatched.

This was the journey to Bosnia at the end of June, 1914; here at last was a chance for the Duchess of Hohenberg to step into the full limelight at her husband's side within the domains of the Emperor Francis Joseph.

Early in the morning of June 24, 1914, the programmes of the journey were handed to me from the office of the Controller of the Imperial Household, with the express instructions that they were merely for the information of Count Paar and were to go no further, as all details would be arranged elsewhere.

The programmes were printed in two different forms, because the Duchess of Hohenberg was travelling direct to Sarajevo, whereas the Archduke Francis Ferdinand was first to be present at the Bosnian military manœuvres. But the composition of both was striking to anyone who knew anything at all of the court routine. That of the Duchess was also couched in the official form, setting out every detail ceremoniously and authoritatively, which hitherto had been used exclusively for occasions when the Emperor was making visits of state in his capacity as ruler and head of the State. It had recently been adopted, though only rarely and at the express command of the Emperor, in the case of one or two special missions undertaken by the heir presumptive as the direct representative of the sovereign.

When Count Paar read the Duchess's programme he ejaculated in astonishment:

"This is pretty strong! What are we coming to?"

I took the liberty of remarking: "The Emperor's consent must have been obtained!"

"Possibly," replied Count Paar; but his tone told me that he did not believe it. Without further remark he left the carrying out of the programme to the Emperor.

The latter then ordered all preparations to be made for his departure for Ischl on the 27th June, in spite of the fact that only the day before he had definitely declared that owing to the many claims of pressing state affairs, he could not think of visiting his summer seat before the middle of July. This change of programme was more than astonishing in a man like the Emperor Francis Joseph who as a rule never altered his plans. The explanation soon became apparent: the Emperor took this course to avoid the impending personal interview with his nephew on his return to Vienna from the south-east. The form in which the latter and his wife had announced their proposed journey had by no means found favour with the Emperor whom it had taken by surprise: too old and weary to put his foot down, he preferred to avoid a meeting with his heir.

On the day following the Emperor's arrival at Ischl, Sunday, the 28th June, 1914, in the early afternoon the news came through by telegraph of the murder of the heir and his wife at Sarajevo. The Serbs knew well enough with whom they had to deal. The feeling that Francis Ferdinand might be dangerous to them, might interfere with their plans, drove them to get him out of the way.

Without delay Count Paar brought the terrible news to the Emperor who ordered the return to Vienna for the following morning. During the day I was up to my eyes in work and had no opportunity of discussing with Count Paar this ghastly tragedy which had fallen like a thunderbolt from heaven. The opportunity did not come until late in the evening.

Count Paar began the conversation:

"The Emperor is now an old man; he has gone through so much trouble already—much worse than this."

"True," I replied; "but this disaster must have been a terrible blow to him."

"Of course," returned Count Paar; "but you know how it was between the Emperor and the Archduke: there was no love lost. It has always been the same. The Archduke has done a great deal to estrange his uncle who was originally favourably disposed towards him.

"It is a long time ago since the personal relations of the two ceased to be cordial. Then came the marriage which the Emperor, as head of the dynasty and a stern upholder of the legitimist principle, could not forgive. This marriage caused the monarch the bitterest heart-searchings; even after the Archduke's formal renunciation of the succession for his children the Emperor could never get rid of the fear that Francis Ferdinand, encouraged and goaded by his over-ambitious wife, would one day find ways and means to secure the throne for her eldest son. These anxieties gnawed incessantly and painfully at the Emperor's heart. He was for ever reproaching himself in the bitterest terms for having allowed the marriage, even under these conditions, and so perhaps exposed the empire, already shaken by a succession of heavy blows, to a disaster that might well be fatal."

"And now—why should I conceal anything from you?" the Count went on hesitatingly, after a few moments of silent reflection: "The Emperor didn't say much about to-day's awful calamity. At first he was overwhelmed, as though stunned by the blow; for a few minutes he closed his eyes and remained lost in thought. Then he spoke—not so much to me as to himself—the words seemed to tear themselves from his heart:

"'Horrible! The Almighty does not allow Himself to be challenged with impunity . . . A higher power has restored

the old order which I unfortunately was unable to uphold . . . ' finally the Emperor, betraying signs of the deepest emotion, turned to me and ordered to-morrow's return to Vienna. Not another word."

Shortly afterwards Count Paar quietly repeated the Emperor's words :

" ' The Almighty does not allow Himself to be challenged with impunity . . . A higher power . . . ' The old Count was in the habit of repeating noteworthy sayings of his master over and over again to stamp them deep on his memory ; that he should follow this custom unconsciously now convinced me that these were the exact words that had fallen from the Emperor's lips.

And they show, better than any more explicit statement, what were the relations between the Emperor and Archduke Francis Ferdinand at the last. With the death of the Archduke and his wife a load fell from the old monarch's heart ; the Emperor—say what you will—could not restrain a feeling of relief.

But—*oltre il rogo non vive ira nemica*—the Emperor now hastened to Vienna to do the last honours to the murdered pair and to take their orphaned children to his arms. Back in his palace his first thoughts were for these orphans : he at once summoned the Princess and Princes of Hohenberg—for the first time in their lives—and remained for a long time with them, doing what he could to comfort and console them. Then he dealt with the arrangements for the State funeral, which, unfortunately, was to give rise to serious difficulty.

For it was not easy to find a precedent for the burial of the late Archduke's morganatic wife in the unelastic regulations of the court ceremonial, set hard and fast by ancient tradition. All the less so since Archduke Francis Ferdinand had been Inspector-General of the military forces, a fact which alone would call for a display of the most elaborate

military ceremonial at his funeral. To meet the difficulty, separate funerals for the murdered pair in Vienna were proposed in many quarters as the simplest and most appropriate solution. This proposal was supported by the fact that in any case—in accordance with Francis Ferdinand's will—the pair were to be buried side by side in the vaults of the castle of Artstetten in Lower Austria.

But the Emperor Francis Joseph would not hear of such a thing. He declared emphatically that Francis Ferdinand and Sophie Hohenberg had died together, victims of the same conspiracy, and must together receive the last rites of the Church, both in Vienna and at Artstetten. In this the monarch was certainly right.

In allowing himself to be persuaded to reduce the pomp of the funeral rites to a minimum, however, he made a serious mistake for a section of public opinion interpreted the command, the significance of which was not at first generally grasped, as an intention on the Emperor's part to show his displeasure at Francis Ferdinand's morganatic marriage, and reveal his strained relations with the Archduke and his wife even beyond the grave. Unhappily, colour was given to this interpretation by the autograph memorandum of July 6, 1914, from the Emperor to the Controller of the Imperial Household, Prince Montenuovo, which expressly laid down that all the details of the arrangements for the funeral procession of the murdered pair in Vienna were to be submitted for the Emperor's personal approval.

The Emperor thought this course necessary in order to protect Prince Montenuovo against the criticism to which he would certainly have been subjected as a result of the drastic restrictions on the display of sorrow at court, and the absence of official pomp and foreign mourners.

This object was attained, and the Controller of the Imperial Household, who—I have never been able to understand why—was not popular with the people of Vienna,

seemed to some extent to be reinstated in their favour. So high had feeling run against him at this juncture that, in order to give public expression to it, a few members of the aristocracy and certain officers had thought fit to ignore the instructions issued for the funeral procession in Vienna and, during the last stage to the Westbahnhof, from which the remains of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and the Duchess of Hohenberg were to be conveyed to Artstetten, they formed a separate escort. Many of them passed uncomplimentary remarks, not only about Prince Montenuovo, but also—though in a veiled form—about the old Emperor.

There was another important reason for not inviting foreign princes to the funeral ceremonies. Such an invitation would have had to be sent to every court, including Belgrade. As King Peter had for years been doing his utmost to get himself received at the Austrian Court it was fairly probable that he would accept the invitation. This would have given rise to a whole series of very awkward situations for the Emperor, so that, from this point of view alone it seemed advisable to abandon the idea of a ceremonial procession.

There was, however, another deeper and weightier political motive for this absence of pomp and ceremony in the funeral arrangements which was popularly regarded as being too drastic ; the two Minister-Presidents and Count Berchtold would not have been anxious to have the funeral attended by foreign potentates or their representatives, especially in the case of Russia, England and Italy, for that would naturally have given an opportunity for a discussion of the Austrian attitude towards Serbia. It was desirable that such discussion should be avoided at all costs so long as they were not yet quite clear in their own minds what attitude they were to adopt towards the Belgrade government. It was obvious that they were already contemplating exceptionally sharp measures against Serbia and wanted to avoid any risk of intervention

by foreign mourners. The ruling political circles in Vienna were anxious to maintain the fullest freedom of action in any event, and, with this in view, excluded participation by foreign courts with the excuse of a very simple funeral.

Count Paar discussed these points of view with me from time to time, and concluded his remarks by pointing out that in 1859 England held back the arm Austria had already raised against Piedmont, with results seriously disadvantageous to our interests.

"That game must not be repeated," said the Count. We can't let this funeral provide even a shadow of excuse for it!"

Thus the Sarajevo crime left lingering echoes of harsh discord in Vienna, to which, during the actual interment in Artstetten, the elements contributed a last chord with the crash of thunder, lightning, storms of hail and a roaring wind. It was as if this event had called down the wrath of the whole universe, this tremendous storm heralding the tempest of fire and steel, blood and tears which was about to sweep down over the horror-stricken human race.

CHAPTER VI

THE ARCHDUKE CHARLES

ON June 29, 1914, when the Emperor Francis Joseph, after receiving news of the murder of Archduke Francis Ferdinand and the Duchess of Hohenberg, immediately broke off his summer visit to Ischl, where he had arrived only two days before, and hurried back to Vienna, he was met at Penzing station by the new heir, the Archduke Charles. The Archduke wore the full-dress uniform of a lieutenant-colonel of the 39th Hungarian Infantry Regiment, and as his great-uncle alighted from the train he approached respectfully, observing full military ceremonial. The Emperor Francis Joseph, visibly pleased to see the Archduke Charles immediately on his arrival in the capital, grasped his right hand with both his own and pressed it long and warmly. He then took the arm of the young Archduke and accompanied him to the imperial carriage waiting at the station entrance. In this the Emperor and Archduke took their places side by side. Amidst the enthusiastic cheering of the dense crowds which lined both sides of every street the sovereign and his new heir drove to Schönbrunn.

It was at once clear to all that the Archduke Charles, who had hitherto kept almost entirely aloof from the public gaze, was now taking a position in the foreground of the political stage. This was all the more marked—particularly during this memorable drive side by side with the eighty-four-year old monarch—since it was plain that, according to

human standards, it could not be very long before the fate of the millions who made up the Hapsburg Empire would fall under his supreme control.

Naturally the Archduke Charles at once became the cynosure of all eyes. The interest taken in him became keen and lively; on all sides men wondered what they might expect from this new heir to the throne. Not much was known about him. Of course he was not entirely a stranger to the Viennese, but hitherto they had had no reason to distinguish him particularly from the many other archdukes who made up the very large royal family.

From the day in question, however, all that was fundamentally changed. The quite exceptional heartiness of the greeting accorded him at the Penzing station by the Emperor Francis Joseph, usually far from demonstrative, made this clear. I had the impression at the time that the Emperor found it very gratifying in those grave times to feel at his side an heir who had come into his new rights in the full power of his young manhood; besides, here at last was an heir without blemish in the eyes of this man of strong views. That was a factor of the utmost importance in the old Emperor's eyes. The murdered Francis Ferdinand had, in part at any rate, lost the confidence he had once enjoyed by his morganatic marriage; this was the view the Emperor had taken and maintained. On this point he remained adamant. The resultant anxiety which weighed him down and, in particular, clouded all his visions of the future, prevented him from according to the Archduke Francis Ferdinand that cordiality and confidence which were indispensable to the monarch and his heir if the public good was to be served.

In the case of the Archduke Charles these obstacles no longer existed. From the outset, therefore, his position in relation to the Emperor was appreciably more favourable than that of his deceased uncle had ever been. Thus the Archduke Charles came, as it were automatically, nearer to

the heart of the people of the Danube Monarchy, as there were no misunderstandings between him and the sovereign who had endeared himself to his people by threads of affection which had been nearly seven decades in the weaving. This is the explanation of the frank and affectionate sympathy immediately extended from all sides to the Archduke Charles. Its foundations were further widened and deepened by the merry and attractive personality of the young heir. The question naturally asked in many quarters in the last days of June, 1914: What may we expect from Archduke Charles? met at once with an emphatically favourable answer on purely sentimental grounds.

Even to those who gave the matter deeper consideration such an answer appeared to be not unjustified, for so far the career of Archduke Charles offered no reason for misgivings for the future.

Born on 17th August, 1887, in the castle at Persenberg, on the Danube, as eldest son of the Archduke Otto (who died on the 1st November, 1906) and his wife Maria Josepha, the Archduke Charles had in his mother a daughter of King George of Saxony and the most tender and selfless guardian of his childhood. When he was barely eight years old, two tutors, Captain Count Georg Wallis and Dr. Joseph Holzlechner, were appointed to direct his first studies. These he dispensed with, when, from 1897 to 1904, he attended the *Schottengymnasium* in Vienna. To the general and humanistic curricula were added in his case a special linguistic course which was developed in a practical way by visits to Hungary and France. The Archduke also studied the Czech and English languages; in all these he attained considerable fluency. That foreign travel in his case, too, proved of great value in mastering the various languages was made clear to me by a chance remark of Count Wallis. The Archduke, employing the usual grammatical method, had been working simultaneously at French and Hungarian, and found

neither easy to acquire. He then paid a visit to Hungary, at the end of which Count Wallis asked him in which language he could express himself with greater ease, French or Hungarian. "Far more easily and accurately in Hungarian, of course," replied Archduke Charles. Shortly afterwards he made a considerable stay in France, and on his return to Vienna, Count Wallis repeated the question; this time the Archduke replied with complete conviction: "Incomparably better and more fluently in French, of course!"

Not until his sixteenth year did Archduke Charles begin to add instruction in military matters to his curriculum. In order to gain an inside knowledge of these subjects he was, in the autumn of 1904, gazetted a lieutenant in the 1st Uhlan Regiment, his father's. From October 1, 1905, he was permanently attached to the 7th Dragoon Regiment. He remained with this regiment for fully seven years to learn the practical side of military service. During this relatively long period he not only saw service with his squadron, first as a subaltern and then as squadron commander in Bilin, Brandeis on the Elbe and Altbunzlau in Bohemia, as well as Kolomea in Galicia, but he went through a two-years' course of juristic studies in Prague under the direction of professors at the German University there.

The fact that the Archduke served for many years with the same cavalry regiment and, with only occasional interruptions, lived in the somewhat restricted atmosphere of the Corps of officers, was bound to influence his mental and moral development. In any case his time at Prague University left few traces of its influence upon him, not least because in the regiment the exceptionally good-natured and easy-going Archduke found himself for the first time in a self-contained world. The men by whom he was continually surrounded and among whom his rank gave him the leading rôle, saw to it that he should be pleased with the new position they had made for him and regard it as something worth

striving for in the future. This is the only way in which I can explain the fact that Archduke Charles, after he became Emperor, attempted to introduce into the court an atmosphere which was doubtless appropriate and homely enough for the officers' mess of a cavalry regiment—an absurdity which proved the more disastrous in its consequences from the fact that the young Emperor did not confine himself to introducing these innovations into the immediate *entourage* of the sovereign, but also did his best to find positions there for his youthful companions. At first sight a harmless policy, but one which proved very dangerous in its results! As it turned out, this "court clique business" at once proved detrimental to the early popularity of the new Emperor, and the national affections for him gave place to hypercritical judgment of all the ruler's actions on the part of large sections of his people. The feeling, erroneous at any rate in part, that only "friends of his youth" were of any account with the Emperor Charles, and that he was exclusively under their influence, soon made the public suspicious towards their young monarch. During 1917 and 1918 there were all sorts of unfounded rumours, most of them being exaggerated and distorted, imagination being allowed full play as a rule unfortunately in a direction unfavourable to the Emperor. But it sufficed to expose the public activities as well as the private life of the young Emperor to a merciless criticism which was no longer tempered by good-will.

This the Emperor Charles was not in a position to face. In the first place his short career as a ruler was not in any way marked by success, and he soon reached a point where only the trust, affection and loyalty of his people could have held him up. This development is all the more regrettable as neither the Emperor Charles nor the Empress Zita really deserved their fate. In the moment of crisis, however, the people threw over their Emperor with rare unanimity; no voice was raised in his favour, no arm was lifted in his

defence. He was simply passed over, even before the throne of his fathers was smashed in pieces.

I thought fit to mention this at this point because the fundamental causes of these phenomena are to be found in the wasted years during which the Archduke Charles was devoting himself to mechanical, superficial squadron work. They came at that stage of his development when his mind was most impressionable, his character most plastic, his whole personality ready to be moulded for the destiny awaiting him. Such educational needs could certainly not be supplied either by the officers' mess of a cavalry regiment or the quarters of a squadron.

What the Archduke Charles missed above everything else was the watchful eye of a father; at this stage of her son's development his mother could no longer supply this need. It is true that the Archduke's father, the handsome Archduke Otto, who was more than gay, was not a man who could have been trusted to exert even a salutary, and certainly not an authoritative influence on the training of the Archduke Charles for the throne; it may have been a stroke of luck—as not a few maintained—that his early death relieved him of any chance of exerting direct influence upon his son. Those who knew the Archduke Otto must agree. Any influence of his on the career of the Archduke Charles could hardly have been to the latter's advantage.

The Archduchess Maria Josepha, whose married life had not been without its trials, devoted herself to her eldest son at that time with the tenderest and most affectionate solicitude, and this the Archduke reciprocated with real devotion. But when all is said and done Maria Josepha was only a woman; she could therefore influence her twenty-year old son only indirectly. Nevertheless, it was due to her initiative and typically German, serious view of life that the Archduke Charles had the opportunity of completing a thorough school education at the *Schottengymnasium* in Vienna, and

later, during his stay in Prague, of attending the University course of juristic studies, an advantage of incalculable importance to an heir to a throne. But for her, such an idea would probably not have occurred to anyone.

In this connection the question necessarily arises: What was the Emperor Francis Joseph doing all this time? Did he not trouble himself at all about his great-nephew and prospective successor?

The Emperor did certainly keep an eye on the Archduke Charles. But during his childhood and early youth his father the Archduke Otto was still alive. After the father's death another figure, at first scarcely noticeable, but gradually looming larger, began to come between the monarch and the Archduke Charles: the Archduke Francis Ferdinand. And the latter was the direct heir during the not inconsiderable period from 1896—after the death of Archduke Charles Louis, or rather from 1889 (after the death of Crown Prince Rudolph) until 1914. The Emperor Francis Joseph's relations with him were on that footing only. During all those years he could not think it likely that he would see another heir. This in itself is sufficient excuse for the Emperor Francis Joseph having followed the career of the Archduke Charles with no more attention than he had devoted to that of the other Archdukes.

The Emperor, oppressed with cares of state and bent under the weight of repeated blows of fate, could no longer bring himself to intervene directly in the education of the Archduke Charles, quite apart from the fact that he also had no time. In addition to this we know that the Emperor Francis Joseph had never possessed any particular aptitude for educational questions. The tragic career of his only son is sufficient evidence of this. How could it be expected that at his greatly advanced age he should succeed in doing for the Archduke Charles what he had failed to do for the Crown Prince Rudolph?

But even if the Emperor had been minded to take special interest in the upbringing of the Archduke Charles, he would not have found the task an easy one, for it is certain that the Archduke Francis Ferdinand kept a watchful eye on the relations of the Emperor with the young Archduke. He actually contrived, at any rate for a time, to keep them apart. This finally became apparent to the Emperor's suite. Men immediately began to associate it with Francis Ferdinand's presumed intention of finding some way of bringing his eldest son, Prince Max of Hohenberg to the throne.

Such a conclusion is not logical, for even supposing that Francis Ferdinand was nursing such aspirations, which is far from being established, he could not hope to realize them until after the death of the old Emperor. It would have been ridiculous to force upon the sovereign, stern and unbending in all that concerned the ancient traditions of succession, schemes that ran directly counter to these and were therefore certain to call forth his grave displeasure. Such a procedure not only would have done Prince Max of Hohenberg no good, but would have been seriously damaging to his interests, so that such plans would from the outset have been dangerous for the Archduke Francis Ferdinand. I do not believe for one moment that he really intended to put his eldest son on the throne, and his will, in which all arrangements for the succession were provided for, contained the command that the Duchess of Hohenberg should at once be officially proclaimed as "Consort," and the Archduke Charles as "Heir." This seems to give the lie to all the rumours connected with the name of Prince Max of Hohenberg.

It seems to me unnecessary to fly to such obscure motives in order to explain Francis Ferdinand's conduct. All that he had in mind was that, so long as he had a claim to the first place in the state after the Emperor, he did not intend that any competing influence should stand between them. It is

obvious that the young Archduke Charles could have been such an influence, especially as Francis Ferdinand's morganatic marriage made his position particularly delicate. To a serious and solid thinker like the heir the best course was to keep Charles and the Emperor apart.

The result of all this was that the Archduke Charles was for a considerable time a stranger to the Emperor's personal suite and therefore to me.

My first opportunity of observing him at close quarters came during the grand manœuvres in Carinthia at the beginning of September, 1907. During these and the Kaiser manœuvres of 1908 near Veszprem, and in 1909, at Gross-Meseritsch, the Archduke Charles—then a lieutenant in the 7th Dragoon Regiment—acted as orderly officer to his uncle, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand.

On this occasion I was very favourably impressed by the Archduke. Slender, tall, and lithe in movement, he had inherited the admirable figure of his father, the Archduke Otto; on the other hand his features bore unmistakably the Wettin stamp which was so marked in his grandfather, King George of Saxony. This resemblance was inherited by the Archduke Charles through his mother. It had run in the royal house of Saxony for centuries with extraordinary persistence. I found it out in June, 1902, when, as a member of the Emperor's suite, I was present at the funeral of King Albert in Dresden, and was quartered in the Taschenberg palace. Here the halls and galleries were hung with a vast number of portraits of Saxon dukes, electors and kings from ancient to modern times, and all these were distinguished by the same heavy, almost coarse, features and meditative expression. It was the same with the Archduke Charles though in his case considerably relieved by the freshness of youth and the bright blue Hapsburg eyes.

The fact that the Archduke Charles at the Kaiser manœuvres was merely an orderly officer jarred upon me, for

the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, with a view to emphasizing their official relations would shout orders at him in our presence—orders that simply meant trivial or silly errands to various headquarters. The whole purpose of the thing was obvious, and gave it the air of a military farce. That the part should be played by the future bearer of the Hapsburg imperial crown, and that before spectators, displeased me. I hinted to the Aide-de-Camp of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, Major von Brosch-Aarenau, that it would be better for the Archduke Charles to be attached to the manœuvre Headquarters Staff, so that he could get a broad view of the way these affairs were conducted. Major von Brosch, however, did not fall in with my idea. He thought that the Archduke Charles had as yet hardly sufficient grasp for this and ought to content himself for the time being with humbler duties. Altogether Major von Brosch did not speak very favourably of the Archduke Charles and complained, among other things, that he was too fond of indulging in jeering comments and sarcastic criticisms about those with whom he came in contact.

"Of course they are not meant seriously or maliciously," concluded Major von Brosch; "but it will be a good thing for the Archduke to stay with us for the present, so that we can quickly get him out of these bad habits."

In the summer of 1909 the Archduke Charles was visiting Franzensbad, where Princess Zita,* one of the many children

* This name is extremely uncommon in Germany. It is, in fact, a genuine Italian name and particularly popular among the peasantry of Lucca. It is virtually nothing more than an abbreviation of the Latin word *tacita*, the "peaceful," or "silent."

In the twelfth century a certain poor peasant girl living near Lucca had become so prominent through her piety and untiring devotion to good works that after her death she was universally revered as a saint. She was called Zita, perhaps on account of her modest appearance and quiet ways. She was subsequently regarded throughout the western portion of central Italy as the patron saint of female servants.

Be that as it may, it says something for the genuine piety and natural simplicity of the Duke and Duchess of Parma that they had their daughter christened with the name of a serving-maid.

of the Duchess Maria Antonia of Parma, and at that time seventeen years old, was also staying as the guest of the Archduchess Maria Annunziata. The Duchess was a widow, her husband, Duke Robert, having died on the 16th November, 1907. The Bourbon Princess Zita was born at Pianove castle at Lucca on the 9th May, 1892. Her personality was a happy combination of Italian vivacity with German training, and the Archduke Charles was at once attracted by her.

But it was not until the Court ball at the Hofburg in Vienna that the Archduke Charles openly avowed his affection for Princess Zita, and as both his mother, the Archduchess Maria Josepha, and the Archduchess Maria Theresa, the widow of the Archduke Charles Louis and sister of the Duchess of Parma, did their best to encourage the match, the betrothal of the Archduke Charles to Princess Zita of Parma took place on the 14th June, 1911.

At this time the Emperor, who was suffering from severe bronchial catarrh, was seeking a much needed rest at the Hermes Villa in the Lainz Tiergarten. Thither the Archduchess Maria Josepha hurried to bear the news of her son's betrothal. The Emperor was surprised and not too pleased at this event which had been brought about by the ladies of his family, but finding himself faced with an accomplished fact, he had no choice but to give his consent. Count Paar had thought that the Emperor had more ambitious plans for the Archduke Charles, and indeed rumours to this effect were circulating. What had caused the Emperor special anxiety was the fact that the family of the late Duke of Parma had included several feeble-minded children—by the first marriage, it is true. Also the fact that Princess Zita belonged to a deposed Italian royal house did not strike the Emperor as a good augury. But after all, it was an equal marriage which the Archduke Charles was contemplating; this consideration helped the Emperor, who had gone through

so much bitter disappointment in this respect, to overlook these objections.

Henceforth the preparations for the marriage were hurried on and it took place on the 21st October, 1911, at the castle of Schwarzau am Steinfelde (Wiener-Neustadt), the Austrian seat of the Duchess of Parma. The Emperor Francis and King Frederick August III. of Saxony, uncle of the Archduke Charles, were present. During the taking of some group photographs of the guests after the wedding banquet the Emperor, whom no one thought of covering with a cloak, caught a severe chill, bringing on a serious attack of bronchitis from which he did not recover until the following summer. Feverish and coughing, he returned to Schönbrunn where his malady grew so much worse during the autumn that his life was feared for. Often in his painful struggles for breath the Emperor would burst out: "Oh, that wretched day at Schwarzau!"

On the 1st November, 1912, the Archduke Charles was gazetted major in the 39th Hungarian Infantry Regiment. This unit was stationed in the old barracks in Mariahilfestrasse, Vienna. This brought the Archduke and his young bride to the imperial capital where for a time public attention was focussed upon them.

The Emperor assigned to his grand-nephew as a residence the small but beautiful castle of Hetzendorf, not far from Schönbrunn, which thus became a centre of court society. This proximity naturally drew the Emperor into closer personal relations, not only with the Archduke Charles but also with his wife. He allowed the Archduke to represent him on many occasions and entrusted him with missions which seemed to call for the services of one of his nearest relations.

It was all to the good that during their sojourn at Hetzendorf Castle, only interrupted by a few excursions to Reichenau or Schwarzau am Steinfelde, neither the Archduke

Charles nor the Archduchess Zita courted public attention. Quite the contrary: the archducal pair were always of a retiring disposition. This was particularly noticeable in the Archduke's dealings with the Emperor and contrasted agreeably with the brusque and domineering manner which the Archduke Francis Ferdinand not infrequently adopted towards his sovereign. So it came about that the Archduke and his charming wife endeared themselves more and more, not only to the Emperor but also to his suite, and soon afterwards to the population of the imperial capital. What appealed particularly to the Emperor in his lonely old age was the atmosphere of family affection in Charles' home, as serious discord had for many years embittered his own married life. The family life of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, although no less happy than that of his nephew, could not be shared by the Emperor, for in his eyes the marriage was still the morganatic match.

About this time I had my first audience of the archducal pair in Hetzendorf Castle on the 17th March, 1913.

I liked the choice simplicity which distinguished this little court at Hetzendorf, itself a residence quite on the small side. Without any exaggerated formality, I was ushered by the chamberlain into the presence of the Archduke and his wife. As I entered the drawing-room, they both came forward graciously to receive me; both shook hands, and the Archduke at once invited me to sit down. Their action was a departure from the official etiquette of such audiences and gave our meeting the character of a friendly visit.

I was particularly gratified by their both showing a friendly interest in myself and my family. This would never have occurred to the Emperor who rigidly avoided even the most indirect reference to the private affairs of those to whom he gave an audience—unless they belonged to the highest social circles. I believe the Emperor regarded it as derogatory to his dignity to show the slightest interest

in such matters. The Archduke Charles and the Archduchess Zita took quite a different view and soon established personal touch with those whom they received.

It is a tragic and cruel stroke of fate that these two, who showed themselves so sympathetic and justified the highest hopes, failed so completely when they came to fill the place that fate had assigned to them. But in justice it must be admitted that the responsibility for the collapse of the Austrian Empire does not lie entirely with them. I shall always remember a conversation I had with Dr. Lammasch, the eminent professor of international law, in the summer of 1918. He was intimately acquainted with the Emperor Charles who often resorted to his political acumen in questions of difficulty, especially in regard to peace possibilities. Dr. Lammasch took a very gloomy view of the future. As early as 1917 he did not conceal either from himself or the Emperor that the continued existence of the Austro-Hungarian Empire would be seriously endangered unless peace were immediately concluded, even if a refusal on the part of Germany to follow suit involved the disruption of the alliance. This attitude drew down upon Lammasch the violent hatred and lasting enmity of the German political circles in the empire, though subsequent events have clearly shown that he was right.

Lammasch's experience brought him to the conclusion that the Emperor Charles, though inspired by the best intentions, was quite unfitted by character to deal with the stormy events of the times.

"The times are too great for him!" said Lammasch in the course of the conversation: "The Emperor is too good-natured, too simple, too human. He does not trust himself to use his authority, and boldly act the part of traitor to-day to his country in order that he may be her *saviour* to-morrow."

It is interesting, too, that after the collapse of the Danube Empire Dr. Lammasch often drew a parallel between the

Emperor Charles and King Charles I. of England. He thought there was a striking similarity between the two monarchs. It was not merely that they both happened to have the same name and Bourbon wives. There were the further facts that both reigned during mighty upheavals in Europe (the Thirty Years' War in the case of Charles I. of England) and both were ultimately brought to ruin by internal dissensions.

I confess I did not think the comparison really apt. When Lammasch brought it up once more I pointed out that our Emperor Charles was distinguished by his unassuming simplicity and real kindness of heart, whereas it seemed to me Charles I. of England was and remained simply an aristocratic *grand seigneur.* I drew another fundamental distinction between the two monarchs. The Emperor Charles stuck to his friends and confidants with a fierce loyalty which perhaps was not infrequently ill-timed. Charles I. of England abandoned and sacrificed his friends with pitiless and quite repulsive indifference whenever it suited his purpose to do so. One need only consider the cases of Strafford and Laud.

All Lammasch could reply was: "Anyhow Charles I. of England perished while his country survived. With us it was the other way round! Which do you prefer?"

I answered with another question: "But can anyone say that the Emperor Charles was wholly and solely responsible for the collapse of the Danube Monarchy?"

Dr. Lammasch did not reply.

These reflections have carried me very far from my real subject. I must return to it, and more particularly the period in which the Archduke Charles resided in Vienna.

It proceeded on familiar lines of domestic bliss until that 28th June, 1914, on which the Archduke was suddenly thrust into the foreground of events and found himself at his great-uncle's side. On May 1, 1914, he was promoted to lieutenant-colonel in the 39th Infantry Regiment and on

the following August 1 the Emperor made him colonel of the 1st Hussars, which bore its sovereign's name. In this capacity he accompanied the Commander-in-Chief, the Archduke Frederick, to Przemýsl, Neusandec and Teschen. It is very hard to say what impressions the Archduke gathered from his experiences at the side of the supreme commander in the field, and whether they promoted his intellectual development and helped to mature his judgment. It is certain that he was not particularly edified by what he saw of headquarters and its work. I learned that myself from his own lips.

He was not altogether satisfied with the peculiar position of the Archduke Frederick and his virtually nominal powers. It was natural that the young heir should think Frederick had all the limelight, though he was really a victim of his unquestioning obedience to the Emperor and probably himself realized what a disagreeable part he had to play at army headquarters. That he played it without flinching is a monument to his strong sense of duty. Some time later, when the Archduke Charles was emperor, he was subsequently relieved of his functions as Commander-in-Chief in a fashion which could hardly be called flattering. He naturally felt he had been badly treated.

At the end of 1914 the Archduke came into really close touch with the Emperor, and the latter decided to discuss both military and political affairs with him as a regular thing.

It was the Empress Zita who unconsciously brought about the helpful and intimate co-operation between the old sovereign and his young heir.

When the Archduke went to headquarters the Archduchess and her small children remained behind in Vienna, where she divided her time between her fixed residence, Hetzendorf Castle, and Schönbrunn. As a result of her visits to the Emperor at Schönbrunn the latter saw both her and her children every day, spent a little time with them,

and soon took them all to his heart. In those serious and exciting days it was both a comfort and recreation for the old sovereign to pass an hour or two in the company of the young Archduchess and her merry family. The Emperor's special favourite was the little Archduke Francis Joseph Otto, the Archduke Charles' charming eldest son. There is no clearer proof than the fact that the Emperor enjoyed nothing so much as being photographed with his heir's handsome child.

Another result was that when the Archduke Charles returned to Vienna from General Headquarters from time to time, he immediately came into close and continuous contact with the Emperor. Before long short visits no longer satisfied the Emperor. He made the Archduke, whom he had promoted to the rank of Major-General on the 1st August, 1915, join him once and for all at Schönbrunn, and thereafter only occasionally sent him on missions to General Headquarters or other high staff headquarters at the front.

The Archduke thus began to take an active share in the business of government. Many memoranda from the military and civil cabinets were reserved for the Archduke's final revision or decision in the name of the Emperor. The latter was relieved of some of his many tasks, and on the other hand the Archduke was given a chance of familiarizing himself with some of his future duties. Of course only minor departmental questions were left to his decision; not problems of any great difficulty. Yet even in this subordinate sphere he revealed that unvarying kindness of heart which without exception inspired his judgment of all documents and proposals put before him. On the other hand, all the world could see how obstinately Charles adhered to his preconceived opinions and how difficult it was to convert him to better ones by solid argument. As a rule it was absolutely impossible. In the Military Cabinet it meant that while the Emperor could easily be convinced by argument, attempts to convince the Archduke always failed, however great the effort.

It was particularly in departmental matters that the Archduke meant to show that he intended to have his own way. His idea was to prove himself a " progressive " and to disregard customary formalities, however hallowed by age. As a rule he cared little for expert advice, while his friends often made him do what they wanted without his discovering the fact. Whereas the regular and formal observations of a qualified official usually had no effect on the heir's personal views on a particular matter, it sometimes happened that a chat with some of his friends made him change his mind at once.

The idea of a " friend," which was absolutely unknown to the Emperor and had small weight even with the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, was a matter of the greatest significance to the Archduke Charles and opened up unpleasant prospects of unofficial advisers, back-stairs influence and similar phenomena. It was in these days that I began to realize that it would have been advisable to remind the Archduke of that impersonality and objectivity which formed such prominent and insufficiently appreciated characteristics of his great-uncle.

There was still room to hope that the Emperor's precepts and example would still have a certain effect in that direction on the development of the Archduke's character, but I soon realized—and my suspicions were confirmed by certain casual remarks of the Archduke—that Charles considered his great-uncle's views and methods out of date, in many ways, and therefore ripe for reform.

It was his friends, with whom he always kept in close touch, who more than anyone else encouraged that view, and the consequences were in some ways regrettable. The Archduke certainly treated the empire with the greatest and most genuine respect, but one could not but feel that he did not agree with many of the Emperor's actions, decisions or commands. In fact, one could read his thoughts and be

The late Empress Elizabeth.

[*Facing p.* 160

quite sure that he frequently told himself that things would be very, very different when the wheel of state came into *his* hands!

The longer he remained in this state of mind the greater became his desire to carry through the projected changes as soon as possible. He worked out all the details. His plans had already assumed fixed and tangible shape in his mind, and when the Emperor was gathered to his fathers we saw the Emperor Charles introduce his reforms at hurricane speed, without considering the necessity for a transitional stage, and thus plunge the monarchy into disaster.

The development of this revolution, which at first seemed as sudden as inexplicable, is in fact perfectly logical and obvious.

Not less so was its first manifestation in the breathless, impatient haste with which, immediately after mounting the throne, the Emperor Charles got rid of all the counsellors and confidants of the Emperor Francis Joseph, however efficient and experienced they were and however difficult to replace. They were the representatives of the old system which the young Emperor regarded as effete and even fatal. If this system was to be abolished there was no time to lose in getting rid of these men.

The Archduke Francis Ferdinand's intentions with regard to the future of the monarchy were fairly well known, and even the Crown Prince Rudolph's political views were not altogether a secret, although the latter had had no immediate reason to concern himself very seriously with the many problems of the Hapsburg Empire, as at that time his father was still comparatively a young man. But of the programme of the Archduke Charles practically nothing was known. I discussed this point once with Count Paar. He made light of it and simply remarked with a laugh that the Archduke Charles had no programme at all. Once on the throne he would be incapable of any more enterprising course than

that of letting things continue on the old lines as best they could.

"And that's the wisest thing one can do." With which words Count Paar closed the discussion.

That was, however, by no means a true reading of the situation.

I had myself from time to time heard the Archduke make remarks indicating that it was his intention to reorganize the Austrian Empire internally as well as to change the trend of her foreign policy. The first part of this programme he intended to carry out on democratic lines, while the second was to take the form of a *rapprochement* between Austria-Hungary and the Western Powers. In some of these schemes the influence of the Archduchess Zita might be traced.

That influence began to make itself felt immediately after the Archduke Charles' marriage, and when he ascended the throne became patent to everyone. For that reason many people are still inclined to attribute the long succession of mistakes which marked the two years of the Emperor's reign to the perpetual interference of the Empress Zita in all the important questions which claimed the attention of the young ruler.

I have already said that the Emperor Charles put a high value on the views of his friends. The same was true of those of his wife. The Empress frequently went to her mother, the Duchess of Parma, and her aunt, the Archduchess Maria Theresa, for advice on all sorts of matters. She also, but less frequently, consulted her mother-in-law, the Archduchess Maria Josepha. The result was that in many things the Emperor allowed himself to be guided by women so that individual and emotional elements, not to mention purely momentary factors, played an outstanding part in the consideration of practical questions.

The most remarkable thing about the Archduke Charles

was the fact that while he attached little importance to, and even considered himself entitled to ignore information and memoranda sent to him through official channels, he was inclined to treat everything he heard from private sources as the guide to the line of action he was to pursue. In this he was the exact opposite to his great-uncle.

There is one point I should like to emphasize here. During the whole time spent by the Archduke Charles at Army Headquarters, and later at the Emperor's side at Schönbrunn, he never once gave the slightest hint that in the case of his becoming Emperor he would end the war. I even had a feeling that he never harboured any thought of a conclusion of peace not synonymous with the final victory of the Central Powers. The Archduke Charles was anything but a sabre-rattler, but neither, in my opinion, was he a partisan of peace by understanding. At any rate, if he ever said anything to that effect, it never came to the ears of the men about the Emperor Francis Joseph.

I must certainly admit that when we were once discussing this topic in our office at Schönbrunn early in September, 1916, Count Paar asserted that the Archduke Charles' ideas about the war were extremely pessimistic, and that he regarded what was happening in Germany as mere " bluff " to save the situation for the moment. He added that the Archduke had a poor opinion of both Hindenburg and Ludendorff and that the moment he mounted the throne he would immediately break away from Germany and somehow find means of making peace at the first possible moment.

This seemed to me a very odd view and I tried to get to the bottom of it, but found no sort of confirmation. Quite the contrary. Lieutenant-General Ritter von Marterer, the Deputy Chief of the Military Cabinet, who was in high favour with the Archduke Charles, scoffed angrily at such a notion, and insisted that he knew the Archduke well enough to be certain that when he became Emperor the war would be

conducted with an energy hitherto unknown, that the whole resources of the state would be employed and it would be given the impetus it needed. Marterer described the Emperor—and there can be no doubt that he was giving utterance to his heartfelt convictions—as a sworn foe to the peace idea and an enthusiastic supporter of the association with Germany through thick and thin to the bitter end.

Could one have better proof that no one really knew the Emperor or had any notion what his views were ? As a matter of fact when Charles became Emperor he took neither of the two courses in question. He chose that fatal middle path, open to all of us, which led only too soon to the destruction of the Danube Monarchy.

The period of probation at the Emperor's side brought the Archduke Francis Charles promotion to the rank of lieutenant-general in the spring of 1916, followed, in the beginning of May, by his appointment to command the 20th corps, with the rank of cavalry general. Now the Archduke was to take his place in the great arena face to face with the enemy ; this was considered essential in the interests of the dynasty. Who was the actual originator of this idea seems of little importance, but it is certain that the Emperor Francis Joseph did not at once approve of it and was only with difficulty persuaded to consent. He gave way at last, however, when General Conrad, Chief of the General Staff, also urged that step. With him it was a question of at last realizing his favourite plan of a great offensive against Italy from the Tyrolese eastern frontier, and it would do no harm to add to its splendour by giving a leading rôle to the heir to the throne.

The Russian break-through at Luck and Okna soon brought the operations in the south-western theatre to a standstill and the Archduke Charles took over the command of an army in the east where the situation, which had become very precarious, was only just saved.

The old Emperor took great pleasure in following the promising activities of his great-nephew in positions which were making great demands upon him, but soon, all too soon, the Archduke was to be called upon to face vastly more important tasks. The thread of Francis Joseph's life was cut by the fates. An hour or two earlier the Archduke Charles had come to Vienna to receive the old Emperor's dying blessing, and at 9 p.m. on the 21st November, 1916, he became Emperor of Austria and Apostolic King of Hungary.

The figure of the old sovereign who for so many years had won a place in every heart was now suddenly changed for that of an Emperor and King in the full bloom of youth, with all youth's hopes. Every voice in the Danube Monarchy was raised to acclaim him and the Emperor Charles could aptly have applied to himself the words of the poet :

"Lorsqu'aux yeux du peuple que j'aime,
Je ceignis les lys éclatants,
Il applaudit au rang suprême,
Moins qu'aux charmes de mon printemps . . ."

CHAPTER VII

THE COURT

THE portrait of the Emperor Francis Joseph as a man gains in clearness when it is detached from the particular background supplied by that narrow world in which he lived and moved. The narrow world in question was the imperial court.

At the present time it is wholly and solely a thing of the past. It vanished with the dynasty and nothing else was possible or thinkable. The only traces left are empty buildings, personal property, landed estates. The institution itself has disappeared, taking its spirit and atmosphere with it, not to mention its staff of officials.

The apparatus which was known to us from our childhood as the "court" was required by the sovereign, not only as machinery by which to exercise his authority but as ocular proof of that authority. It also symbolized the historic splendour of the imperial house because from small and more than modest beginnings in the early Middle Ages it had grown with the Hapsburgs and developed, partly as the result of a skilful policy of aggrandizement and partly of a natural evolution which always followed the trend of the times, into that awe-inspiring creation which the Austrian court, the most brilliant and best organized in the world, became during the long reign of the Emperor Francis Joseph.

To the generality of people the constitution and functions of the court may at first sight have appeared fairly

simple, particularly as everything went so smoothly and automatically for the guest or mere spectator that it was almost impossible to believe that there could be any difficulties of organization. And yet the remarkable efficiency of the highly complicated mechanism, and the necessity of always keeping the court at the highest possible level, demanded a huge apparatus which had to be most carefully supervised, down to the smallest details, and required watchful eyes, orderly minds and active hands to keep it functioning properly.

As a matter of fact it was not easy, and took considerable time and energy, to get any kind of idea of the complicated court machinery. How much harder it must have been to keep that machinery in motion, to furnish it continuously with the necessary power and see that its multitude of parts were always in order, or, if not, replace them at once so that the smooth and regular work of the whole should not be imperilled for a moment.

All this called for first-class controlling minds—minds capable of welding the new into the old. This task was assigned to a numerous hierarchy of officials, at the top of which was the Emperor himself.

From him, the apex of the pyramid, ever wider stages descended to that lowest and widest level which comprised the servants, manual workers and others employed at the court and paid daily or weekly.

The Emperor, as head of the court, was in direct touch with the highest court officials who received their instructions from the sovereign alone and reported to him personally, either verbally or in writing.

These highest court posts were reserved for members of the highest and oldest nobility, and in particular there was an old custom that the Controller of the Household, the supreme office at court, was the preserve of a princely family.

The complexity of the duties entrusted to the Court Ceremonial department can best be shown by a short review of some of the ceremonies which took place from time to time at the Hapsburg court. These claimed the services not only of this department, but also of the other branch of the Controller of the Household's office; the Chief Equerry's department and occasionally the department of the Grand Chamberlain; all the court departments—as far as possible—had to co-operate in order to ensure the perfect functioning of the whole court machine.

This was the principal task of the Court Ceremonial department, and a task of no little difficulty, for the Emperor Francis Joseph, with an eye quickened by an experience extending over more than an average lifetime, kept a keen look-out to see that all court ceremony was carried through, not only with faultless precision but in the most perfect and distinguished style. The Emperor had a distinct natural flair for these formalities; his judgment on questions of ceremonial, founded on the deepest knowledge of every detail, was regarded as final. No breach of the traditional court rules, however slight, ever escaped him; his eagle eye at once noticed the least omission. This the Court Ceremonial department had to bear in mind which made its duties particularly arduous. But they were worth doing well, for the court of Vienna had the reputation throughout the world of being not only the most splendid, but in every way a model of what a court should be.

On New Year's day there was a special ceremony of greeting to the Emperor. For those outside the family who had the *entrée* to the court, this took place actually on New Year's eve between 8 and 10 o'clock. In the splendidly lighted state apartments of the Hapsburgs, with their wealth of carpets, Gobelins and palms, the Controller of the Household, supported by a lady-in-waiting acting for the occasion in a similar capacity, personally received the

New Year's greetings for the Emperor. This ceremony was attended by the gentlemen and ladies of the high nobility, the members of the imperial and archducal households, the heads of the ecclesiastical, civil and military orders, and the diplomatic corps attached to the imperial court, as well as all the other dignitaries and important personages of the capital. The ladies wore evening dress with jewels, the men wore full court dress or uniform with orders. Court ushers took the names of all arrivals in the ante-chambers and these were formally announced to the Controller of the Household who shook hands and addressed a few words of greeting to each male guest while the lady-in-waiting invited the ladies to sit down beside her for a few moments' conversation. The bustle in the state apartments during these two hours was increased by the continuous arrival of fresh guests to replace the outgoing stream of those who had already paid their respects to their sovereign.

On New Year's day itself there was a dinner for the members of the imperial family at the Hofburg, and in later years at Schönbrunn, during which the Emperor enjoyed a few hours of relaxation among his family. Simultaneously a court banquet was held at the Hofburg, presided over by the Controller of the Household, to which the chief officers of the court and other high dignitaries, ministers of state and the civil and military heads were invited. These banquets, which took place at the same time as the family dinners and at which the Emperor and members of his family were not present, were known as "Marschallstafeln," the allusion being to the fact that at one time the Court Marshal represented the sovereign as host at these functions.

The family dinner in the evening of New Year's day was not attended by any of the members of the Emperor's suite; this was the distinguishing feature of these occasions at which ordinary evening-dress was worn instead of court dress, the military guests wearing uniform without swords.

At other places than Vienna, however—for instance, Budapest, Gödöllö and Ischl—it was customary for the suite to attend the family dinner, at any rate those who had accompanied the Emperor on his journey. These dinners, therefore, stood half-way between the family dinners proper and the official court banquets.

On Fridays and fast days of the Roman Catholic Church the Ecclesiastical regulations were observed though the prescribed dishes were strictly confined to the imperial family, being served only to such other guests as had previously expressed a preference for them. Otherwise the guests were served with the ordinary menu, including meat dishes, even on fast days. This distinction was made clear by the printed menus at each guest's place; for the guidance of the servants and to avoid any mistakes the menus of those who wished to observe the fast were printed on grey cards, the others on white. This custom was typical of the Emperor's tactful consideration for his guests.

State banquets were a thing apart. These were only given during the visits of foreign potentates or on occasions of particular importance, and were therefore rare. At these banquets the court displayed the greatest splendour of which it was capable. This is saying a great deal, for no other court possessed such treasures in the way of plate and table decoration as that of the Hapsburgs. All this was enhanced inimitably by the superb manner in which not only the tables but the apartments in which the banquet was held were arranged. It was a science in itself, developed by generations of experience to a masterly pitch of perfection.

At these state banquets, whether at the Hofburg, Schönbrunn or Budapest, the apartments in which they were held were adorned with a profusion of unique Gobelins, priceless door-hangings and curtains, the choicest palms and flowering plants from the world-famed court gardens. As such

banquets were always held late in the evening the banquet-halls and ante-chambers blazed with the fairy light of countless electric lamps. The table itself, covered with the heaviest damask, decked with the most splendid flowers and laid with the famous gold and silver plate of rarest workmanship, presented a picture that could not fail to give pleasure to the most eclectic artistic taste.

The distinctive feature of these state banquets was the brilliant company of guests. The ladies appeared in evening dress with their most splendid jewels. Those who had the right to decorations or orders of course wore them. The men wore full court dress. Whether military or civil their uniforms were richly covered with glittering orders. The ribbons of the Grand Cross were worn, as befitted the occasion ; the military officers also wore their medals, which was not the custom at other court banquets.

The order of sitting at table was carefully fixed according to the rank of the guests and communicated to them, with precise instructions, the moment they entered the ante-chamber to the assembly room.

Music was supplied by a military band or the court orchestra which was placed in such a way that the sound was muffled and could not impede conversation.

At state banquets the staff to which were assigned the duties of waiting at table and similar functions all wore full dress, by which I mean scarlet tail-coats and waistcoats with gold braid, both cut in the old style, white silk knee-breeches, white stockings and black patent shoes with buckles. The footmen and some of the higher members of the household staff, who did the actual waiting, had powdered hair or white wigs.

At state banquets the Emperor usually gave a toast appropriate to the occasion ; the speech itself was prepared in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Civil Cabinet. When the Emperor had approved the wording, the toast was

written out in big letters suitable to his vision and read out by him from the fair copy during the meal, usually between the second and third meat courses, after the champagne glasses had been filled.

These state banquets at the Court of Vienna were certainly the most brilliant and illustrious companies which the Emperor Francis Joseph, universally recognized as the supreme model of distinction, ever gathered about him.

At other court dinners the function was somewhat similar, though the guests were no less impressed by what they saw.

On the day before the banquet the guest received an invitation which was printed on a stiff card in accordance with court regulations. Not only the invitations themselves, but even the order of sitting down at table, were always passed by the Emperor himself after discussion with the Controller of the Household.

In the ante-chamber to the assembly room the Director of Ceremonies handed each guest a gilt-edged card (these cards were red for one side of the table and white for the other), on which the places at table were lithographed. Another official showed every guest a plan of the table and indicated exactly where he was to sit and how to reach his place.

Thus it was quite easy to find one's place at once on entering the banqueting-room. Every cover had, in addition to its service, napkin and roll of bread, a printed menu and a card on which the guest's name was written in large letters so as to be readily visible.

At state banquets or other court dinners at which there was music by a band each guest found a programme which was printed on a card like the menu. These cards were the finest product of the Viennese paper industry. Each had the imperial arms embossed in gold at the top.

In accordance with an old custom at the Hapsburg court,

the menus were always in French. As a rule the wines were not included. The only exception was in the case of special court dinners and state banquets.

At the ordinary family dinners the servants wore the so-called "campaign" uniform, i.e., a brown, gold-braided coat and long black trousers, and carried a dress sword. The footmen wore the old-style tail-coat and vest, edged with silver braid, black knee-breeches and gaiters of the same colour as the coat.

The Emperor was served by his loaders, who usually wore a green uniform, long green trousers, both with silver braid, and a broad silver bandolier without the hunting-knife.

During dinner conversation was carried on in subdued tones, mostly between next-door neighbours. Thanks to the perfect training of the staff and the pitch of efficiency reached by the service the courses followed one another with astonishing speed. Sometimes a banquet of twelve or more courses took barely an hour. The minute the Emperor rose from table all the guests immediately followed suit. The party adjourned to an adjoining apartment where waiters and footmen brought round black coffee, liqueurs, cigars and cigarettes on salvers, and the Emperor chatted with all his guests.

At family dinners and the very similar court dinners at Gödöllö and Ischl—frequently at Budapest also—coffee and liqueurs were taken at the dinner-table, but the company always smoked in another room—at Gödöllö in the drawing-room leading into the Emperor's suite, at Ischl on the terrace outside the banqueting-hall, or in the ante-chamber when the weather was bad. The gathering after dinner at Gödöllö was particularly homely, especially in August. In the huge but simply furnished drawing-room the Emperor would drop into a chair by the open hearth in which pine logs crackled merrily. The other guests sat round him, and before long a lively conversation was in progress. It often lasted an hour

or more, and the Emperor was at his best with interesting experiences and memories from his full and eventful life.

I have given this fairly detailed description of court dinners here because it was just in the period between New Year's day and Easter—therefore during Shrovetide and Lent—that several of these affairs were given in rapid succession in Vienna and Budapest, although there was no special reason. They were accordingly called *Seriendiners*. To these were invited court dignitaries, the ministers, the heads of the Church, the army and the civil service, members of the diplomatic corps, prominent functionaries of public institutions and services, leaders of the artistic or scientific world and others who enjoyed an outstanding reputation in any sphere. Here the Emperor had an opportunity of meeting them personally and conversing with them longer than would have been possible at the general audiences.

Shrovetide was distinguished in another respect by the court balls, which took place every year in Vienna and Budapest.

In Vienna the scene of action was the Hofburg, and there were two balls in each carnival season. The first of these was the " Court Ball," the second the " Ball at Court." In its way the first was the more brilliant. A host of invitations was issued, for as regards the men the very fact of possessing an Austrian order involved the possibility of an invitation. In the case of ladies the standard was considerably higher and associated with that famous " Hoffähigkeit,"* which could only be given by noble birth, the outstanding position of the husband or some other claim to precedence. The diplomatic corps had the further right of proposing for an invitation members of their own nation of corresponding social qualifications who happened to be in Vienna at the time. These were known as " distinguished strangers."

The " Ball at Court " was more *intime*—the number of

* The quality of being fit to be received at Court.—[Tr.]

invitations was far smaller, and in fact restricted to those holding a special position at court. This ball was held in the "Zeremoniensaal" of the Hofburg. For the "Court Ball," the whole of the spacious assembly rooms of the Burg at Vienna were used. Another difference between the two affairs was that at the "Court Ball" gentlemen wore full dress uniform and all their orders, foreign as well as national, whereas at the "Ball at Court" court dress was *de rigueur* and Austro-Hungarian decorations alone were worn.

The Court Ball at Budapest ranked between the Vienna Court Ball and the "Ball at the Court." In the Hungarian capital the invitations to the Court Ball were also, of course, strictly limited, but full court uniform and all orders were worn.

The court balls presented a fabulous picture of brilliance and splendour. One never tired of watching the splendid dresses of the ladies, with their jewels, worth millions, the varied display of uniforms covered with stars and crosses, the subdued but magnificent robes of the princes of the Church, the court dress of the Hungarian and Polish magnates, the endless variety of uniforms worn by diplomats from every part of the world. The picture, flooded with light from lamps of every size, was framed by the wonderfully decorated rooms with their wealth of palms, foliage and flowers to delight and refresh the dazzled eye.

When the court entered the great ball-room—led by the Emperor with the Duchess of Cumberland or some other lady of the highest rank on his arm—the court orchestra, conducted by that brilliant musician, Maestro Strauss, who was succeeded by the celebrated Ziehrer—played some introductory music, which was followed by dance music.

Figure and other dances were performed by the ladies of the nobility and diplomatic corps with the officers of the household and young men of high rank; the most brilliant of all was, of course, the cotillon, favours and flowers for

which were supplied to the guests by the Imperial Master of the Ceremonies. Court footmen in full livery continually flitted about the ball-room and adjacent apartments with refreshments.

During the dancing the Emperor passed from one to the other of his guests, and the untiring diligence with which he chatted to everyone made one marvel at the physical energy of the aged monarch.

When the dancing was halfway through the court and higher circles moved to the apartments in which supper was served, while the remaining guests went to the great buffet, where tables arranged in horse-shoe shape and attended by court servants were loaded with a profusion of the most inviting delicacies; other court footmen served the guests with beer, wines and champagne. The scene in the buffet soon became very animated, the conversation gay and light-hearted.

The second part of the ball did not last long, as, after supper, the court did not remain long in the ball-room, withdrawing in the same order as was observed at the beginning. Afterwards all the rest of the throng of guests gradually left the Hofburg.

In addition to the court balls at Shrovetide these functions occasionally took place during the official visits of foreign monarchs, though only in a few exceptional cases.

During Shrovetide the Emperor also attended personally other great balls of outstanding importance. Among these were the annual "Vienna Town Ball," at the Rathaus, which was one of the most brilliant functions of the season, the balls given by the Foreign Minister and the heads of the leading noble houses—Prince Lichtenstein, Prince Auersperg, Count Harrach and others—and those of the foreign ambassadors.

Ranking with the court balls were the court concerts. These also were confined to outstanding occasions, such as

visits of foreign princes. Musicians of world-wide fame and court singers appeared at these concerts, their performances being always of the highest quality that the world of music can offer.

Here it is necessary to mention those court "receptions" which were universally known by the name of "*Routs*." Their setting was not unlike that of the court balls and court concerts, excepting that at these functions there was no instrumental music, singing or dancing. The feature of these were the receptions by the Emperor, and their object was to afford him an opportunity to get into personal touch with his guests. These receptions were usually held during the sitting of learned, social or philanthropic conferences, occasionally too, though rarely, during the visit to Vienna or Budapest of foreign potentates, and also during the Emperor's official visits to the principal towns of Austria-Hungary. After the Emperor had conversed with the guests they were ushered into a neighbouring apartment where a great buffet with all kinds of refreshments, beer, wine and champagne was at their disposal.

The castle at Schönbrunn contained a small theatre—now the *Schlosstheater* attached to the *Burgtheater*—in which at important reunions of the imperial family, amateur performances were given by members of the family and nobility in the presence of the court and its guests.

Of course the whole organization of these theatrical performances, like that of the court concerts, apart from the actual production, was in the hands of the Court Ceremonial Department and its allied departments.

Considerable demands were made on this department on the occasion of gala performances in the court theatres, such *théâtre paré* being customary during the visit of royalty to Vienna or Budapest, and sometimes during the Emperor's visits to the chief towns of the Empire. The most brilliant and magnificent of all these *théâtres parés* were given in

Vienna. The whole of the wonderful Court Opera House was reserved for invited guests, to whom seats in the boxes, stalls, parterre and galleries were allotted with the most meticulous regard for precedence. The theatre, brilliantly lighted and decorated with flowers and hangings from the palace, which formed a background for the splendid dresses and glittering jewels of the ladies and the gold-laced uniforms and court-dress of the men, was a wonderful spectacle. The Emperor, with his royal guests and the members of the imperial family, took their places in the great royal box facing the stage. As they entered the whole audience rose, and the orchestra struck up. The subsequent performance never failed to realize the pitch of perfection in the combination of arts. Between the acts all kinds of refreshments were handed round by court servants.

There were different degrees of this *théâtre paré*, according to the importance of the occasion, ranging from the actual gala performance down to the ordinary royal visit to a theatre. A most original performance was given at the Court Opera House when a German East-Asiatic battalion returning home from China passed through Vienna ; the whole theatre was placed at the disposal of the officers and men of the battalion who were entertained by officers and non-commissioned officers of the Vienna Garrison. The Emperor and Archduke Francis Ferdinand—both wearing the uniform of the Prussian 2nd Kaiser Franz Grenadier Guards—watched the performance from the private box adjoining the stage, and were several times loudly cheered by the almost exclusively military audience.

The gala performance at the Vienna Court Opera House on the 2nd December, 1908, to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the Emperor's accession, was especially noteworthy. The brilliant blaze of countless fairy lamps revealed an unusually numerous company, in which all that the Danube Monarchy could show in the way of rank and social or other

distinction was fully represented. The enthusiasm reached its climax as the Emperor took his place in the great royal box among the members of his family; the sovereign, wearing the red and white full-dress uniform of a field-marshal, with the glittering stars of the Austrian and Hungarian orders—on his right breast the dazzling cross with which he had been presented that morning by the military and naval services as a token of veneration—realized the perfect type of the paternal ruler grown grey on the throne.

Following the calendar, these secular Shrovetide festivities lead us naturally to the Church's solemn rites of Holy Week.

These too had their special features at the Hapsburg Court; they began on Holy Thursday with the "washing of feet." The Emperor in the full-dress uniform of a field-marshal performed this "washing of feet" with the prescribed religious ceremonial in the great "Redoutensaal" of the Hofburg which was specially arranged for the occasion. Twelve old men and twelve old women were brought from the municipal almshouses of Vienna—the oldest were always chosen for this purpose; the Emperor knelt before them, passed from one to the other and touched their bare right foot with a napkin dipped in water from a golden basin, while a priest read aloud the Gospel for the day in which the New Testament scene is described. It was a touching ceremony and made a lasting impression on the spectators who were admitted by cards obtained from the Controller of the Household. After the Emperor and Court had withdrawn the old people were handsomely rewarded and driven back to the almshouses in royal carriages.

On Good Friday the service of the Entombment was read in the Hofburg Chapel in the presence of the Emperor, after which the Host was carried by the Court Chaplain in solemn procession to the Holy Tomb, which was at the Bellaria end

of the Kontrollor gallery. On these occasions the Emperor always wore the uniform of Colonel-in-Chief of the 8th Austro-Hungarian Field Artillery Regiment. No one could ever explain to me the reason for this, so I asked the Emperor himself who replied that he thought this his most subdued, least elaborate uniform and therefore most appropriate to the occasion. In these processions the Emperor walked immediately behind the canopy covering the Host, followed by the archdukes. The route was lined by the imperial body-guard, and the choir of the court chapel, walking before the canopy, chanted Church music. It was a simple and solemn ceremony, and the reverence which marked it gave it a special appeal.

After the Entombment, the public were admitted to the Joseph Chapel during Good Friday and the following day, and a continuous stream visited the Holy Tomb to offer prayers at its foot. In the afternoon of Saturday in Holy Week came the festival of the Resurrection. In the presence of the Emperor and members of his family the Host was taken from the altar at the Tomb in the Joseph Chapel and borne in solemn procession to the Court Chapel. In favourable weather it would pass through the inner courtyard of the castle, otherwise along the Kontrollor gallery as on Good Friday. During my seventeen years in the Aides-de-Camp's Department it was only once possible for the procession to use the inner courtyard ; the climate of Vienna is too bleak to allow of such ceremonies in the open air so early as Easter, especially as it was necessary to bear in mind the Emperor's advanced age and the fact that he had to walk bare-headed in the procession.

On Easter Sunday the Resurrection high mass was solemnly celebrated in the Hofburg Chapel, which was flooded in a sea of light, in the presence of the Emperor in full dress, the archdukes and archduchesses and all the highest dignitaries of the monarchy. The Papal Nuncio

usually officiated, assisted by a large number of priests. The orchestral music, choral singing and first-rate solo singers contributed to make this high mass one of the most impressive ceremonies at the court. As Easter Sunday, like Corpus Christi, had been appointed a festival of the Golden Fleece, the Emperor, as Grand Master of the Order, placed an offering of twelve gold ducats in the collecting-plate handed to him. These were distributed among the lower clergy present. The *Generaladjutant* obtained these ducats from the Emperor's privy purse, and handed them to the monarch just as he entered the church.

With the Easter festivities the yearly round of court ceremonies generally came to an end. The exception was the celebration of Corpus Christi which fell in the late spring and provided an occasion for a superb display of both court and ecclesiastical magnificence.

First thing in the morning the Emperor proceeded from the Hofburg to the metropolitan church of St. Stephen in a state-coach drawn by six horses. The archdukes, each in a coach drawn by four horses, preceded him. It was a sight which carried one back to the days of the great Maria Theresa! The coaches—a blaze of glass and gold—the magnificent harness and trappings of the horses—magnificent creams of Spanish breed—the coachmen, outriders and grooms in their black, gold-laced rococo coats, white stockings, buckle shoes, and wigs under their huge three-cornered and two-cornered hats adorned with gold braid and ostrich feathers—one did not know where to look or how to take in this unique spectacle!

The Emperor himself wore the full-dress uniform of a field-marshal, with the ribbons of the Order of the Golden Fleece, the Order of St. Stephen and the Order of the Iron Crown (only the ribbon of the Grand Cross, not the sash, was worn on this occasion), with the stars of the Grand Cross of the Order and the sash of the Military Maria Theresa

falling from the right shoulder to the left hip (the Grand Cross of this order and that of the Francis Joseph Order had no ribbon).

He was an object of universal admiration as he drove slowly between files of troops across the Kohlmarkt and the Graben to St. Stephen's cathedral.

There he was given the royal salute with drums and trumpets by mounted detachments of the Arcièren and Hungarian bodyguards and an infantry company of the bodyguard drawn up facing them. In solemn procession the sovereign entered the cathedral, accompanied by the deans of the order. He proceeded up the choir to the epistle side of the high altar where the Cardinal Prince-Bishop of Vienna celebrated high mass in his presence.

This was followed by the celebrated procession. It was headed by the Knights of all the Austrian and Hungarian orders, in order of rank and length of membership. Next came the ecclesiastics, with the Cardinal Prince-Bishop who carried the Host under a canopy. Immediately behind was the Emperor, bareheaded and carrying a lighted candle. He was followed by the Archdukes, the higher dignitaries, the Burgermaster and town-council of Vienna and several corporations and brotherhoods. The procession wound its way through Kärntnerstrasse, the Neuer Markt, Augustinerstrasse, the Kohlmarkt and the Graben. Open-air altars had been erected on the Neuer Markt, Lobkowitzplatz, Michaelerplatz and the Graben. At these the gospels were read. After the return to St. Stephen's the benediction was said and then the Emperor mounted the state coach again and returned to the Hofburg via the Graben and the Kohlmarkt.

A few minutes later he took his place by the Franzen monument in the inner court and took the salute of the troops as they marched past. Thus ended this magnificent and most imposing ceremony—a ceremony with the traditions

of centuries behind it and one of the most impressive sights in the world.

As a rule there was no occasion for court ceremonies in the summer, if only because the Emperor spent the hot months at Ischl in accordance with ancient tradition. The Emperor's birthday, the 18th August, fell in this time of the year but it was essentially a family affair. Official ceremonies at the Emperor's summer residence were always avoided.

On his birthday the Emperor heard low mass first thing in the morning at his villa. Then he received the congratulations of his family and the small suite which accompanied him to Ischl. At half-past three there was a family dinner in the imperial villa at which Prince Leopold of Bavaria proposed the Emperor's health, whereupon the sovereign replied by emptying his glass of champagne with the words : " To the health of my dear family and welcome guests."

The Emperor's participation in the annual grand manœuvres marked the transition from the summer season to the autumn and winter seasons and involved his return to Vienna and Schönbrunn. Although there was no regular succession of court ceremonies before Christmas, there were always some, each of which had to be regulated by a special programme appropriate to the occasion. The very size of the imperial family meant that christenings, weddings and, unfortunately, funerals, were by no means rare occurrences, so that there was plenty of work for the Court Ceremonial Department. The Emperor always reviewed the necessary arrangements personally. Nothing was done unless it had been previously approved by the sovereign.

The Emperor's state functions also involved court ceremonies, if only to give them the necessary *éclat*. I might mention the receptions of the Austrian Reichsrat, the Hungarian Reichstag and joint delegations of those two bodies at the opening of the sessions. On these occasions the Emperor did not go to Parliament, as is usual in other

constitutional countries. He summoned the representatives of the nation to his presence at the Hofburg in Vienna and the Royal Castle at Budapest.

In Vienna members of the Upper Chamber and deputies assembled in the *Zeremoniensaal* of the Hofburg, where a throne was placed. The Emperor entered, accompanied by the highest court officials, and mounted it. In his full-dress Field-Marshal's uniform, with the sash of the Grand Cross of the Military Maria Theresa Order, the old monarch made a splendid figure. He put on his general's hat with green plumes and then read out the speech from the throne in a loud, clear and very audible voice, bringing out the more important passages in a rather deep tone. Bodyguards and dignitaries stood round the throne from which the monarch rose at once and retired to his apartments, accompanied by the court officials as before.

The same ceremonial was observed in Budapest except that the Emperor wore the Hungarian field-marshal's scarlet dress uniform with the frogged white cloak and the Grand Cross band of the Order of St. Stephen. Around the throne were gathered Hungarian bodyguards and dignitaries, among them old Count Julius Széchényi with the sword of state, and a canon who held the great apostolic cross of silver in his green-gloved hands.

The Emperor never failed to attend in person the military mass for the dead which was celebrated by the Apostolic Chaplain-General in the Church of St. Augustine in the first half of November. It was a memorial service for all those who had died in the army and navy, and there was an atmosphere of reverence about it which was particularly touching. After the service the troops marched past the Emperor who took the salute under the Albrecht steps opposite the Mozart monument.

The Emperor always spent Christmas at Schloss Wallsee, near Amstetten, with the family of his younger daughter,

Marie Valerie. This was practically the only leisure the overworked monarch ever permitted himself. Here, among the many children of his daughter, he gave himself a little real amusement and recreation. He always took part in the decoration of the Christmas trees and was never happier than when helping to distribute the presents.

CHAPTER VIII

FRANCIS JOSEPH AND HIS PEOPLES

IT is long ago—during my early childhood—since I first heard the Austrian Empire called an anachronism; it was said that as such it had no right to exist, and that only the personality of the Emperor held its tottering structure together. It was prophesied that after the Emperor's death Austria-Hungary would collapse like an old barrel from which the hoops had been removed.

For decades men went on saying the same thing and in 1918 this prophecy was actually fulfilled before our eyes.

But how is it possible for public opinion to ascribe to any one individual the capacity and above all the authority to hold together a federation of states, which, according to many political experts, had, strictly speaking, lost its right to exist?

I pondered over this question for years, and only very gradually arrived at a conclusion, supported by a mass of details personally observed and retained in my memory; details in themselves unimportant, but together forming evidence of considerable weight. I came to realize more and more that the Emperor Francis Joseph, though an old man by no means gifted with outstanding mental faculties, was, in a certain sense, if not the only, at least one of the strongest bonds that held together the structure of the Danube Monarchy, in our era a decayed and tottering thing.

The Emperor Francis Joseph himself never dreamed for a moment—this I can vouch for—that he would be the last

of his line to end his days on the Imperial Throne. Quite the contrary : he was firmly convinced that there were centuries of progressive development in store for his dominions. It was just this complete ignorance of the tremendous responsibilities which weighed down his aged shoulders that alone gave the Emperor Francis Joseph the strength and courage to cope with the tremendous mass of demands which, in his eyes, summed up the lifework of a sovereign. It is obvious that he was helped in this by the unflinching devotion to duty which always inspired him and which was one of his life principles. Closely allied to this was the aloofness which, from his early youth, he had regarded as the prerogative of his royal position.

He was the first in the State.

Not in the same sense as Asiatic despots or Roman Emperors, but solely by virtue of his natural character, a character combining all the qualities of a first servant of the state. But though the servant he was always and everywhere the first !

He held no private communications with advisers, or even friends—it was commonly believed that he *never* had any friends ; he held himself aloof even from his family. Everyone, without any exception, had to regard him as the Emperor and nothing else.

It was just because this attitude admitted of no exception and Francis Joseph was *never* anything but the sovereign—neither more nor less—that he was always recognized as such by everyone and accordingly regarded with spontaneous respect.

There can be no doubt that by such self-effacement the Emperor was offering a real sacrifice on the altar of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. His attitude was all the more praiseworthy because it involved the complete absorption of the ruler in the state, a fact which explains why everyone bowed to his authority, especially when it was known that the laws

made by the people's representatives were not only respected but carefully observed by the Emperor himself. He was always extremely careful to avoid even seeming to set himself above the law. Such an idea never entered his head.

It had not always been so. In his youth the Emperor had groped in the darkness for a long time, and some of his worst mistakes had been made at the most critical moments. These experiences—generally unfortunate—served to refine and temper his character. Like all of us, he had to pay his tribute to human nature, however difficult it might be at the time and whatever bitterness it might leave in his soul. In any case, the trials imposed on him by Providence were more severe, the disappointments that fell to his lot more bitter than ever fell to the lot of any other ruler.

At the same time it is certain that none of the blows that fate rained upon him ever really touched his inmost being. Towards the end of his life the aged monarch stood in a position of complete isolation; it almost seemed as if during his last days the world had forgotten him.

Be that as it may, he appeared to disregard these terrible blows of Fate, his more or less avowed enemy. Even in times like these he showed himself, in the fullest meaning of the word, the true sovereign, never thinking of himself when the prosperity and development of his dominions were at stake.

In his own way he was, doubtless, a whole man and a great man.

I say "in his own way" because throughout his life he remained simply and solely the director of an unusually efficient machine, controlling with conspicuous skill and with an unusually sensitive and patient hand the vast and intricate mechanism which kept his Dual Monarchy in action.

There is no doubt that he may be regarded as one of the best and perhaps the most remarkable of the rulers which the ancient dynasties of Hapsburg and Lorraine have ever

produced. These dynasties have always been poor in outstanding personalities, their representatives for the most part being of average capacity and often for centuries even below that standard. Francis Joseph, undeterred by the vicissitudes of fate, showed himself capable of rising above the usual level of his contemporaries.

This was realized by his peoples; his very devotion to duty made it clear to them, and in return they regarded him with that real veneration which Napoleon III., for example, so greatly envied. On several occasions the latter remarked:

"Among all the European sovereigns the Emperor Francis Joseph is the only one who is cheered by his people even when returning home after an unsuccessful campaign."

During the last thirty years of the past century the long period of peace, combined with the rapid economic development and general prosperity he was thereby enabled to secure to his peoples, won him a measure of affection such as hardly any of his predecessors had ever enjoyed.

But even in this "happy" period his work was ever attended by an inveterate lack of luck.

The Emperor realized the fact only too well, and much sorrow it gave him. He often put his feelings on the matter into words in the involuntary exclamation: "I never have any luck," a phrase once used of him by the Austrian Minister of Commerce, Schäffle, during a conference with the Emperor in the spring of 1871.

At the close of the Emperor's reign his constant lack of luck, so momentous an element in both the great and small things of human life, swiftly undid all the good derived from the progress and successes of the tranquil period I have mentioned. For, quite unconsciously and still less willingly, he, of all men, was fated to give the signal for that appalling world struggle which has just struck the Empire of his ancestors to the ground and flung the twitching fragments of its ancient territories to the winds.

How could Francis Joseph, whose dearest aim was the welfare of his peoples, have let loose this war upon the world? Did he think that in so doing he was acting in accordance with the aspirations of his subjects?

The question can only be answered by those who have tried to realize the relations between the Emperor and the mixed population of his Empire.

The aged Monarch's first and foremost aim was to treat all his subjects of all the nationalities of the Danube Monarchy exactly alike. That was his intention, and he pursued it honestly and resolutely. It is impossible to doubt or challenge the fact. But, of course, there were limits, a fact which is sufficiently explained by the imperfection of human nature on the one hand and the inadequacy of the means whereby intention is translated into action on the other.

In the first place Francis Joseph was a *German* prince. It was in that capacity that he ascended the throne of his fathers in the stormy year 1848, and such he remained, perhaps unconsciously, during the eight-and-sixty years of his reign. In his heart of hearts he stood for all that was old Germany, at any rate in that universal sense which prevailed in the German Confederation before it was destroyed by the fratricidal war of 1866. The direct result of that war was the appearance of the dualistic Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, whose founder Francis Joseph himself became on the advice of the Chancellor Baron von Beust. It was a natural result of his high conception of duty and his innate conservatism that the Emperor always stood by the preservation of that particular form of constitution and firmly and unwaveringly adhered to the principles prescribed by the "Compromise" of 1867.

Yet in the end his stubbornness on this point proved in many ways disastrous. In the eastern half of the Empire the Magyar nation, basing their claims on the rights granted them in 1848 and confirmed by charter in 1867, adopted a

resolute centralizing policy which had as its ultimate object the complete absorption of all the non-Magyar nationalities in the territories of St. Stephen's crown.

The western half of the Empire, on the other hand, had henceforth to preserve its German character, or at any rate an official German stamp. Yet this German ascendancy rested on no real foundation, for in Austria, which enjoyed the not particularly sonorous name of " the Kingdoms and territories represented in the Reichsrat," the German element was actually in a minority. The Germans were thrust further and further in the background by the rapid natural increase of the Slav population in the north and south, and it is therefore hardly surprising that in the beginning of the eighties the demand of the Slavs for national autonomy became more vocal and insistent. In fact a period opened in which the Government at one time had no plans or ideas at all and gave precedence to the rights of the nationalities, principally the Slavs, as the requirements of the moment seemed to dictate, and at another curtailed or withdrew those rights by the action of the central authorities.

In a word, as in earlier times, the game of playing off the nationalities against each other was resumed and the Government believed it could maintain its supremacy on the " Divide et impera " principle. This was the chief characteristic of the long period in which Counts Taaffe and Badeni, of unholy memory, held the office of Austrian Minister-President.

For years and years the Emperor allowed these blind guides to rule unhindered, to the prejudice of the Empire. One of the outstanding characteristics of the old Emperor was that in all departmental questions he would only hear the competent authority—the Minister—and, on principle, disregarded all rival or outside influences. Moreover, when anyone had won his confidence the Emperor always stuck to him through thick and thin unless some catastrophe made a change imperative.

At any rate Taaffe and Badeni were able to do an enormous amount of mischief, which subsequently proved more or less irreparable, for by degrees the political chaos in the western half of the Empire developed into national chaos, which it was beyond the power of later Governments to control. The Government had finally to rest satisfied with meeting the necessities of the moment and devoting all its efforts to obtaining a majority in the chamber by the employment of all possible expedients and, as a rule, back-stairs influence. Any great programme was now beyond it. Even the two best Minister-Presidents in the later years of the Emperor's reign, the extremely able Ernst von Koerber and the industrious Baron von Bienerth, failed to secure any change, and even they could only keep the leaking ship of state afloat by great efforts and the employment of all kinds of artifices they thoroughly disliked.

This political decadence of the western half of the Empire was exploited by Hungary, not unskilfully, to realize her selfish ambitions. Her most effective opportunity was that periodical renewal of the "Compromise" between the two States which had been provided for in 1867, on the very proper principle that future developments might make changes advisable. On these occasions the Hungarian conditions became more and more exorbitant, and the Austrian Government, the position of which was always shaky owing to the domestic situation, was neither strong nor firm enough to oppose any serious resistance to Hungary's bullying. The result was that a state of high tension gradually developed between the two halves of the Empire which paralysed any efforts to pursue a practical and profitable foreign policy, and made it virtually impossible for the Empire to command respect abroad.

The Emperor was much too old—at any rate in my time—to use his personal influence to put things right, and in any case the constitution itself and the dual organization of

The Archduke Francis Ferdinand.

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the Empire hampered any vigorous intervention by the Crown. One feature of the structure of the Danube Monarchy was that the Emperor had to deal with separate Austrian and Hungarian ministries—in a word with a vast number of ministries, each of whom possessed the right to report to him personally. The effect was that all kinds of proposals were put before the Sovereign by many authorities of equal competence, and it was so harassing a problem to select the one which would satisfy everyone that a thorough and well-considered solution was hardly ever arrived at.

Of course the Emperor had his Civil Cabinet to help him. By its constitution it was supposed to serve not only as an intermediate authority—which it was—but also, I think, as a regulator and even a safety valve for the Sovereign's activities in domestic affairs. To conform to the dualistic division of the monarchy it comprised an Austrian and a Hungarian section, with a common head in the Chief of the Cabinet. The Austrian section was composed of officials belonging to all the nationalities of the western half of the Empire; the Hungarian of Magyars exclusively, with the exception of one or two Croatian functionaries. In practice the head of the Hungarian section enjoyed wider powers than his Austrian colleague because he dealt independently with matters concerning Hungary, and laid his proposals relating to such matters before the Emperor personally, while in the Austrian section this function was the duty of the Chief of the Cabinet.

The Civil Cabinet, with its considerable staff, had its official seat at the Hofburg in Vienna. When the Emperor was travelling, staying in towns in the western half of the empire or residing at Ischl for the summer months, he was accompanied by the Chief of the Cabinet, sometimes only by the Director or a Councillor of the Austrian section. They always took a few officials with them who could speak the language of the district to be visited. When the Emperor

travelled or stayed in Hungary the Director of the Hungarian section and a few of its Hungarian officials were included in the suite.

When the Emperor travelled abroad he always took with him representatives of both the Austrian and Hungarian sections.

During my period of service in the Aides-de-Camp's Department the office of Chief of the Cabinet was held by Baron von Schiessl who had been transferred from the diplomatic service. Through our official relations I came to realize what a zealous and unusually tactful man he was and what amazing knowledge he had. Yet I could not resist the impression that he lacked initiative and therefore was not too fond of responsibility. The result was that under his direction the Civil Cabinet was not, as it probably should have been, an intermediate but independent authority but virtually neither more nor less than a channel through which official documents passed. It merely sent on to the Emperor the minutes and proposals passed to it by the various ministries and usually confined its activities to obtaining the sovereign's approval of the final draft drawn up by the Ministers themselves.

It may be that this practice was in accordance with the right view of the Civil Cabinet's functions, but it struck me as much too anæmic. Of course, in all really important matters the Minister-Presidents or even the Ministers reported personally to the Emperor so that they had an opportunity of justifying their proposals and explaining them in detail to their sovereign. But this meant that the Emperor always heard the views and intentions of one side only—and that the most interested—and in spite of conferences and audiences there was nothing for him but to accept this one-sided presentation of the case and decide accordingly. The system meant that in the long run the Minister-Presidents or Ministers were omnipotent, a fact which not infrequently had disastrous results.

This was all the more probable because the Emperor was hardly in touch with public opinion. He was informed of its trend only through a few officials who were naturally biased.

By " public opinion " I mean more especially that of the legitimate representatives of the people, the deputies. The Emperor could have learned much that would have been of benefit to the state from conversation with them, if only because he would have had that direct personal touch which the most carefully composed written documents could not give.

This is my own view. It may be quite incorrect. Once when I was discussing the question with Freiherr von Kizigin-Mardegani, the able and cultured secretary to the Cabinet who is well versed in its procedure, he shook his head and said with conviction :

" At first glance that seems sound. For a long time I thought the same myself, but now, after many years of political experience, I've arrived at the firm conviction that this scheme is merely hypothetical and would not work in practice. The result would not only be that every fresh question would give rise to a storm of chaotic and heterogeneous discussion that would enormously complicate the carrying out of any of the Emperor's decisions, but the Civil Cabinet would have to have the services of a disproportionately large staff if it had to deal with the unofficial as well as the official questions that such a system, however efficiently worked, would be bound to raise. And further, to settle most questions, even those of little importance, would involve loss of time and consequent delay which it would be difficult to make good."

Kizigin proved the impossibility of such a scheme and his view is supported by the fact that the young Emperor Charles, who had no practical experience, impulsively tried to adopt it and brought everything to a standstill.

That convinced me, and yet I should have liked to see

closer touch established between the Emperor and the people's representatives.

There were, of course, occasions when the Emperor came into contact with the deputies ; receptions and banquets for the delegations, public audiences and occasional special political receptions. These opportunities, however, were not only rare but very brief. The information that the Emperor gleaned about the welfare of his people in the conversations that followed such parliamentary banquets, as I have myself heard over and over again, was confined entirely to generalities.

The Emperor made a point of not dipping any deeper than this into political and social questions in order to avoid the discovery of social grievances and being forced to take disagreeable action. For this reason he only came into touch with the deputies when it was unavoidable, as, for instance, when he personally opened the sessions of the chambers and read the speech from the throne.

An additional reason for this attitude was the low opinion he held of his parliaments. The reports that reached him only served to increase his impatience with the proceedings of the chambers. The Austrian Reichstag was content to spend its time in vain wrangling over questions of language and national susceptibilities ; the Hungarian Reichstag never rose above its petty policy of pin-pricks towards the western half of the empire and its strivings for full Magyar independence. The important practical questions of the day and the claims of the people's welfare their elected representatives, for the most part, ignored. This naturally distressed the Emperor and strengthened his opinion that parliamentary procedure was not to be taken seriously, since it never produced any definite results. This explains his impatient remark to Count Stephan Tisza, then Hungarian Minister-President, at a lunch at Gödöllö castle in the autumn of 1904.

" So long as the deputies can find nothing better to do

than wrangle perpetually about questions of nationality, I at any rate will have nothing to do with them."

The Emperor, however, adopted a very friendly attitude towards the Delegations, committees of the parliaments of both Austria and Hungary, which met annually, in Vienna and Budapest alternately, to discuss the common interests of the empire. The Foreign Minister, the War Minister and the joint Finance Minister took part in these sessions. There is no doubt that these assemblies worked more expeditiously and with more definite results than the parliamentary chambers ; the tone of their meetings was more dignified. But beyond a few occasional conversations the Emperor never really got into personal touch even with the members of the Delegations.

The Emperor's distaste for politicians may have been aggravated by a further consideration. From his youth up the Emperor Francis Joseph had drawn a sharp distinction between the nobility and the other social classes. Caste feeling has always been the very breath of life to the higher nobility, down to our own times, and it was natural that this feeling should be shared by the Emperor. The last thing he wanted was to widen the circle of those with whom personal contact was necessary, and he considered such a course derogatory to his own dignity. To seek the advice of deputies, politicians, experts or minor officials would have seemed to Francis Joseph entirely out of keeping with the dignity of his position as the sovereign. It was entirely contrary to his principles.

He would have accepted even this sacrifice, however, if he had been convinced that it was his duty, for duty with him came before all other considerations ; but this view never seems to have occurred to him.

The blame for this omission should be laid at the door of the Chief of the Cabinet ; he was the official whose post marked him out as the right man to guide his master on this

point; the Minister-Presidents and Heads of Departments were less responsible as they had enough difficulties of their own with the chambers and it could hardly be expected that they should seek to involve their Emperor in the same troubles, especially as his very aloofness made him the one sure supporter of the Ministers in their struggle with the conflicting demands of the political parties.

And yet, after all my experience at the court, I should have expected much from closer contact between the Emperor and the representatives of his people, elected or permanent. The personal prestige of the aged Emperor, which was realized by all who came near him even for a short time, could not have failed, in my opinion, to have a great effect. I believe firmly that on many occasions the stormy seas of domestic politics could easily have been stilled by the Emperor's personal influence. This influence, however, was never brought to bear at the time of crisis; he would not deal with any question, however acute, except by written communications, and that was not enough. What was required was the spoken word, more effective than the most exhaustive memorandum.

The result was that his method of keeping in touch with current affairs through the medium of ministers, provincial governors and other dignitaries often put him on a false scent; however able, experienced and loyal these men might be, they were after all only human and not proof against the influences of self-interest and opportunism. The Emperor therefore did not always get the truth, the picture that was drawn for him being too often one-sided or even skilfully distorted. This led to unwise action, fatal neglect and half-measures.

From the almost unlimited evidence with which I could support this opinion I will confine myself to quoting one concrete example. During the war Baron von Kizigin-Mardegani, who, as I have already mentioned, was secretary of the Imperial Civil Cabinet, went on a short leave to his

home in Dalmatia. On his return he took the first opportunity of calling upon the Emperor who with his customary keen interest in all that concerned the peoples of his empire, listened carefully to the Baron's comprehensive report of the situation he had found in Dalmatia.

With commendable frankness Kizigin painted the Dalmatian situation in the blackest colours, as indeed was justified by the facts: all men capable of working called to the colours; only old men, women and children left; the fields left uncultivated; the country left entirely to its own resources for want of an efficient system of railway communication with the other states, with no means of combating starvation and the many pestilences that war brings in its train, and, especially among the children, a truly terrifying mortality. In short, it was a picture of the direst misery based on personal observation and painted by Baron Kizigin in words inspired by his love for his native land and unswerving patriotism.

The report made the deepest impression on the Emperor, and Kizigin was just on the point of suggesting measures that might relieve the distress of the people of Dalmatia, when Governor Count Attems, who had just arrived in Vienna from Zara, was announced.

The Emperor received him at once and listened attentively to his "official" account of the situation in Dalmatia. This was quite a different story from Kizigin's. The Governor painted everything in glowing colours, let himself go complacently on the subject of the patriotism of the people who rose superior to any inconvenience the war might have caused, if indeed a few isolated cases of such inconveniences really did exist; he prophesied a future for Dalmatia that gave no cause for misgiving.

With the perfect tact so characteristic of him the Emperor did not give Count Attems the slightest hint that he had already heard a quite different account of the situation

in Dalmatia from another quarter and dismissed the Governor with perfect friendliness.

At the next opportunity the Emperor taxed Baron Kizigin with the conflicting reports. The latter could only insist that he had reported conscientiously and to the best of his knowledge, and neither could nor would endorse the Governor's report.

Shortly afterwards, when Kizigin met Count Attems he gave full rein to his indignation at the Count's report. The Governor, however, merely answered that he was perfectly well aware of the inexpressible misery in Dalmatia, and the inevitable ruin towards which the country was heading, but it had never occurred to him to give a hint of the true situation to the Emperor. It would not have done to upset or excite the aged monarch, already weighed down by so much sorrow, with news of that kind. . . .

Perhaps from this point of view it would have been better —as many with whom I have spoken maintain—to apply to the case of the Emperor of the Austro-Hungarian Empire the principle followed in England and Italy: "*Le roi règne ne gouverne pas*"; a principle which is becoming more and more in keeping with the mentality of modern nations. Whether this would have been possible or advantageous in the case of such an intricate structure as Austria-Hungary I would rather not have to decide. It is possible that in this special case a powerful regulator controlled by the Emperor at the head of the state may have been indispensable to keep such a complicated machine in motion. This must have been the feeling of the Emperor Francis Joseph, based on his long experience, for with his fanatical devotion to duty it can only have been some such conviction that made him so jealous of any encroachment upon his tremendous arbitrary powers as ruler of the empire. There is not the slightest doubt that he was actuated solely by his solicitude for the welfare of his peoples, for with his characteristic

and absolute suppression of self, he never came near, even in thought, to applying Louis XIV.'s famous motto : "*L'Etat, c'est moi !*" to his own line of action.

I have already briefly mentioned the Emperor's weakness for the higher nobility. To a certain point this is comprehensible in a sovereign of his type.

"He thinks more of the nobility than of the rest of his people," once remarked Dr. Ritter von Kerzl, the Emperor's physician for many years, in his abrupt way. This was at the end of August, 1902, when we were travelling with the Emperor's suite from Ischl to Vienna to welcome Queen Maria Christine of Spain who had just arrived. When the royal train arrived at Altmünster station we met the Archduchess Marie Valerie with her eldest children. The Infante Don Alonso of Bourbon was spending the summer there and they were returning from a visit to him. The Emperor left his saloon, conversed for some time with his daughter and grandchildren and then turned to his daughter's gentleman-in-waiting, Captain Count Bellegarde, shook hands with him and asked cordially after his health and that of his family. This was a most unusual thing and astonishing to anyone who had the slightest knowledge of the Emperor's ways. I could not understand in the least how Count Bellegarde came to be singled out in this way as neither his rank, position, nor official duties were in any way eminent. I therefore questioned Dr. Kerzl, who was sitting in the same compartment, and received the apt reply I have given above.

Later on I observed a number of examples of the same thing. It was obvious that the Emperor regarded the nobility as on a higher plane, and he openly treated them with special favour. In the autumn of 1905, one of his aides-de-camp, at the end of the usual period of service with the Emperor, had to rejoin his regiment and a successor had to be appointed. A list had already been submitted by the Ministry of War containing, among other applicants, the

name of Count Schaffgotsche. Count Paar at once said to me :

" That's the one. The Emperor likes to have aristocrats in his suite."

As a result of this preference all prominent positions involving much authority and great responsibility were reserved in the first place for the nobility.

I also often heard the complaint that it was specially characteristic of the Austrian and Hungarian high nobility to let their personal interests take first place in everything. As glaring examples of this I have repeatedly heard people quote the names of the Austrian Minister-President, Count Stürgkh, and the Governor of Bohemia, Prince Thun, to both of whom the responsibility for the collapse of the empire was afterwards imputed by public opinion. Against this I must quote the case of a member of the higher nobility, the Hungarian Minister-President Count Stephen Tisza who devoted himself body and soul, and finally sacrificed his life to the interests and greatness of his country. This is another example of the error of generalizing without carefully weighing all the facts.

The personal aim of the Emperor was to further the interests of every nationality in the best possible way. Of this there cannot be the slightest doubt. If events, as seen by the public, occasionally gave a very different impression, and called forth protests from the different races of the empire, it was not the Emperor's fault. In such cases he appears to have been misinformed, as was frequently the case, or intermediate authorities had acted on their own initiative, and not in the spirit of the Emperor's principles. I cannot too strongly assert, and my assertion is based on many years' service with the Emperor's suite, that the Emperor recognized no differences in his dealings with the peoples whose fate he controlled ; they were all dear to him. As far as he personally was concerned, this was the guiding principle of his reign.

Notwithstanding this impartiality his natural inclinations drew him towards the German-Austrians. He was a German by descent and upbringing, and it was therefore natural that he should regard the German as the core of his heterogeneous empire.

This made him all the more anxious to see the notion of "*Osterreichertum*" become part of the very flesh and blood of German-Austria. This was the cause of his sensitiveness to the slightest indication of latent tendencies among the Germans of his empire to be attracted to the German Empire; the least hint of such tendencies sufficed to upset him altogether.

For the grand manœuvres of 1899, Klagenfurt, the chief town of Carinthia and manœuvre headquarters, was decorated for the reception of the Emperor. Among the flags the black, red and yellow of Germany could be seen here and there over the houses of a few German nationals. Several of these had already been removed by official orders before the arrival of the Emperor but one or two remained. The Emperor's keen eye at once picked them out and his good-humour immediately vanished. The Chief of the General Staff, Baron von Beck, told us the same evening that the Emperor had been very seriously annoyed at the German flags which he regarded as an insult to himself because it was a compliment to the Hohenzollerns.

The same thing happened in June, 1901, in Aussig, a Bohemian industrial town to which the Emperor paid a few hours' visit after staying a fortnight at Prague. As he entered the main square he was greeted by a little girl in gala dress who offered him a bouquet and welcomed him to the "German" town of Aussig in a few words. The Emperor's face immediately clouded, and for the whole of the time in Aussig he was in a bad temper, said very little and took the "mistake" in very bad part. All such manifestations of "Germanism" touched the Emperor's sore point because

he suspected the presence of Pan-German tendencies behind them.

The justice of this view was confirmed by the old sovereign's great apprehension about the "Cut loose from Rome" movement about the beginning of the century. He could not say enough in thankful praise of the attitude of the Prussian, Saxon and Würtemberg courts which "gave this malicious agitation"—as the Emperor called it—"the cold shoulder from the start." As a matter of fact the "cut loose from Rome" movement, which soon died down and came to nothing, was only the war cry of a handful of hotheads and quite unworthy of any particular attention. But just because it appealed most to the Germans, it cost the Emperor many a sleepless night. It had been the same with the activities of Schönerer and his followers twenty years before. The Emperor wanted to be able to count on the Austrians absolutely, whatever might befall.

Next to the Germans the nation in the empire for which the old sovereign had the most affection was the Italian. The events of 1859 and 1866 had robbed him of his real Italian possessions and not many Italian subjects were left to him, but he took a genuine interest in their welfare. There were two Italian councillors in his Military Cabinet who ultimately became directors of sections. Several Italians were employed at court; Italian officers reached the highest posts in the army and some of them were selected as his aides-de-camp. In the government offices at Vienna not a few Italians were in charge of highly important departments. The Emperor had a high opinion of Italian culture. In this he was probably affected by the fact that he could both speak and write Italian perfectly. A final reason was his memories of his happy youth which had been closely associated with Italy. The Emperor never forgot them and often spoke of them with real pleasure. I remember how the court chaplain, Bishop Dr. Mayer, once remarked at dinner

at Ischl in the summer of 1906 that Austria-Hungary hardly ever had as many cardinals as at that moment.

"You're wrong there!" the Emperor immediately interjected. "When I began my reign, the Archbishop of Milan and the Patriarch of Venice also had the Cardinal's hat."

In the Emperor's bedroom at the Hofburg in Vienna hung a small and somewhat crude oil painting, representing him at a review in the spring of 1862 at Mestre, near Venice. I could never imagine why this sorry production enjoyed so great an honour until I heard that the Emperor was particularly fond of it because it reminded him of the splendid times he had had in Italy.

The Emperor had so little sympathy with the ambitions of the Slavs, both in the western and eastern half of the monarchy, that one can only assume that he never understood them. He did not know enough of Slav psychology to judge the significance of their aspirations rightly. Thus he failed to realize the position their very numbers had enabled them to obtain in the Hapsburg Empire by the end of the nineteenth century. The old Sovereign apparently still regarded the Slavs as a *quantité négligeable*, as they had been at the beginning of his reign. It seemed to me almost as if he were under the delusion that the Czechs were merely an appendage of the Germans of Bohemia, the Slovenes an appendage of the Germans of Styria and Carinthia, and the Slovaks and Serbs an appendage of the Magyars.

It is true that he conceded the Poles of Galicia a higher political status, but he did not regard them as of much political importance. He was convinced that they had only to look beyond the frontiers of the empire to see from the fate of their brothers in Russia and Prussia how well off they were in Austria in which their national rights were undoubtedly respected and preserved.

It is probable that the ruin of the Danube Monarchy is

attributable to Francis Joseph's miscalculations in this matter of the future claims of the Slavs.

When the twentieth century opened it was an empire in which the majority of the population were Slavs and yet it was governed by German and Magyar minorities, at any rate officially. There was some excuse for the Emperor's blindness to facts as regards Hungary, inasmuch as the Magyars —or perhaps I should say the politically omnipotent clique at the Hungarian court—took advantage of the Emperor's practice of never receiving information from other than official sources to prevent him having any idea that other nations besides the Hungarians might have something to say. In Austria, on the other hand, the fact that the Germans were in a minority was so obvious that it ought to have made anyone realize that a German régime could not be preserved, even by the use of force.

Unfortunately the Emperor never realized the fact. He suspected it might be so, but with an obstinacy which was perhaps partly due to his age he set his face against all innovations which might destroy, or even endanger, however slightly, the principle of dualism. In actual fact dualism had already been long out of date, thanks to the unsuspectedly rapid and remarkable increase of the Slav population in Austria-Hungary, an increase which shattered the very foundations of the traditional system on which the empire was governed from Vienna and Budapest and from which the Emperor would allow no departure.

During his two longish visits to Prague, in June, 1901 and April, 1907, he absolutely insisted that no distinction of any kind should ever be made between Czechs and Germans. All the ceremonies of the visits were made on that footing. Such was essentially his official attitude and it was inspired by considerations of policy. It was during these two visits that I frequently heard the Emperor remark that Prague was really a German town and that German

culture was predominant in Bohemia. As that was quite contrary to the facts I ultimately began to think that the Emperor simply preferred to hug an agreeable delusion as he was genuinely afraid of being convinced against his will that Bohemia was mainly a Czech country.

The Emperor adopted the same attitude on his occasional visits to Moravia, Croatia or southern Hungary.

On one occasion, when he was present at the manœuvres in the Banat at the beginning of September, 1898, the Magyar ministers and governors told him quite seriously that the numerous Rumanians of that region desired nothing more than to have Hungarian schools and ecclesiastical institutions so that they might be gradually absorbed by their Magyar neighbours. As a matter of fact, with the exception of officials and the inhabitants of a few towns, there were no Magyars in the province. The Emperor was simply delighted to hear the news, a fact which I could only explain on the assumption that he thoroughly enjoyed being able to believe it.

This was entirely in keeping with that view of the nature of the Danube Monarchy which the Emperor had made his own, and once put into words in a conversation he had with the Austrian Minister-President, Dr. von Koerber, during his long stay at Gödöllö in the autumn of 1904. At breakfast Koerber was complaining of the harassing difficulties which assailed the government in Austria. He resigned himself to the conclusion that it could not well be otherwise in the case of a mosaic of nations held together merely by the common bond of an historic past. As a rule the Emperor never joined in political discussions, but this time he made an exception and intervened with the remark:

"I don't agree. Something else besides historical events in ancient days has forced our peoples together. Their union is absolutely necessary to their present and future existence. That's why the monarchy is not an artificial, but an organic body, and therefore unquestionably

indispensable. It is a place of refuge, an asylum for all those national fragments scattered over Central Europe which would inevitably lead a piteous existence if left to their own resources and become the playthings of their more powerful neighbours. By uniting they have not only combined to produce a power which commands respect but have obtained conditions far more favourable to their stability and development, thanks to their social and economic co-operation. It is obvious that in such an association one member must lead. Earlier on the leadership was in the hands of the Germans, now they have to share it with Hungary. Whether the arrangement is effective and profitable is certainly arguable, but we've got to take it as it is, though it's very hard to do so sometimes."

Koerber entirely agreed with these last words. He said that they hit the nail on the head for only a man who had had to arrange the periodical " compromise " with Hungary could realize what a labour of Sisyphus it was.

" That's just because people won't try and understand what a real compromise is ! " the Emperor burst out. " In a compromise both the contracting parties must be ready to make concessions. That's what the Hungarians never realize. They're always insisting on their own claims and forgetting that they have to be reconciled with those of the other half of the empire if the monarchy is not to fall to pieces. They seem to be indifferent to this last possibility, but whether they'll find themselves on a bed of roses when they're left to their own resources remains to be seen. I don't think so, but the Hungarians won't hear of it. Last year I nearly wore myself out discussing this subject with Khuen-Hedervary, Lukács and Wekerle, but with no success at all. The most intelligent men are those who favour union with Cisleithania and refuse to make common cause with irreconcilables like Kossuth, Polonyi and Justh ! "

These words proved for the first time that even the

old sovereign had realized what the Archduke Francis Ferdinand had never been afraid of putting in his own pithy way when he said that the domination of Hungary was a danger, if only a sleeping danger, to the existence of the monarchy.

To return to the Slav question, it is certainly surprising that, having regard to the Emperor's views, the leading political officers and his advisers were afraid of trying to convert him to better ones, though it was unquestionably their duty to do so. But no one could trust himself to speak. The grant of autonomy to the Czechs in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, or the possibility of uniting all the South Slavs in one state under Francis Joseph's sceptre, was not even mentioned in a whisper in the sovereign's presence. If anyone had dared to do so he would have been in the Emperor's bad books for ever, and no one wished to share the fate of Bishop Strossmayer or that which subsequently befell Kramař. In my opinion Strossmayer and his followers were inspired by the best intentions towards the Emperor as well as towards their co-nationals.

The cause of their failure was not merely that the Emperor was bent on the preservation of the *status quo* under all circumstances and for that very reason no government could be found which would venture to tackle this fundamental problem of state policy in earnest. Merely to utter the words "Trialism" or even "Federalism" was itself an act of sacrilege. What a task it would have been, what courage it would have required to grasp the nettle!

It may be that the Danube Monarchy could have been saved, even at the eleventh hour, by the system of "Federalism" of which the Emperor and his advisers would hear nothing. Yet there is not the slightest doubt that any change in internal policy must have led to a Slav ascendancy in Austria-Hungary. The Emperor shrank back in horror from such an idea. He considered such an experiment as a dangerous leap in the dark. In view of his old age and

his nature, there was no possibility of inducing him to agree.

In order to make some move in this direction another avenue was explored. It was thought to soothe the national susceptibilities and the dangers that were threatening, especially from the side of the Slavs, with the universal remedy of social-democratic equality. In universal suffrage, for which the Social Democrats had so long been crying out, it was thought that a panacea had been found for all national evils.

Only from this point of view can the conservative Emperor's ready consent to such a fundamental change be explained. I must mention, however, that the Austrian Minister-President, Baron von Gautsch, then in high favour with the Emperor, as well as his colleagues, supported universal suffrage with eloquent enthusiasm because they hoped that this tremendous increase in strength for Social Democracy would settle all national differences, at any rate in Parliament.

These were the arguments which won over the Emperor, worried to death as he was by national disasters and utterly weary of continuous quarrelling at home, to sanction universal suffrage. This was made all the easier by suggesting to him that it was his duty, as a monarch desirous of keeping abreast of modern development, to yield to the present demand. Francis Joseph was always ready to bow to "Duty."

If ever a ministry reckoned without its host in the solution of a problem it was Freiherr von Gautsch's with regard to universal suffrage.

The Austrian chambers elected on this basis showed well-filled social-democratic benches, but there were no signs of the disappearance of national friction. On the contrary, the national grievances were now forced into the limelight with a sharpness, bitterness and lack of scruple

that would have been scarcely conceivable in former assemblies.

With such a parliament sane legislation soon became impossible and in the crucial period of the war Austria presented a humiliating spectacle. The western half of the empire had to be governed autocratically on the basis of Paragraph XIV. of the emergency laws.

The logical result of the adoption of universal suffrage in Austria would, of course, have been a similar change in Hungary.

The Magyar political circles then in power, however, would not hear of such a thing, for universal suffrage would not only seriously have endangered their authority, perhaps undermined it completely, but it would have given the non-Magyar elements in the Budapest Reichstag their opportunity. This would have meant the final overthrow of the Magyar hegemony which hitherto had had a clear field.

So now it was necessary to call the Emperor's attention to the reverse side of the medal. This was done by pointing out the great dangers to which the Hungarian state would be exposed if the preponderating and all-powerful Magyar influence were broken and the door thrown open to such terrible disintegrating elements as had attacked the very marrow of Austria. The hint was enough to produce a decisive effect upon the Emperor and all the efforts of the Hungarian Social Democrats (even when they demonstrated loudly and continuously in the streets, as occurred during the Emperor's visit to Budapest in the autumn of 1912) to bring about universal suffrage were fruitless.

This is yet another example of the ease with which the powerful caste of the Magyar nobility always succeeded in imposing their will on the Emperor. It was undeniable. His pliability cannot be ascribed to any love for Hungary, for though the Emperor spoke Hungarian correctly and fluently it never afforded him any pleasure to stay in that

part of his empire. According to constitutional usage, he should have spent six months of every year in Hungary, but he always found an excuse for reducing this time considerably.

On the fortieth anniversary of his coronation as King of Hungary, in June, 1907, celebrations took place in Budapest at which the Emperor and most of the archdukes were present. The Archduke Francis Ferdinand was among them. On returning to the royal castle after the special service in the church in which he had been crowned, the Emperor talked for a few moments with the heir. The latter said:

"It's always an effort to me to come to Hungary; I don't like being here."

With his eyes fixed on the ground the Emperor replied quietly: "I feel the same."

Further indications that I noticed strengthened my conviction that towards the end of his life the Emperor was actually afraid of Hungary. This would seem the only explanation of the influence which his Hungarian advisers undoubtedly had over him.

The first symptoms of this fear of Hungary, which he could never overcome, may be traced to the beginning of his reign when Hungary took up arms against his rule. For that reason Francis Joseph, during his old age, avoided all controversy with the Magyars whenever it was possible, gave way to their wishes and during the severest and longest crises—as, for instance, during the conflict about military unity from 1903 to 1910, displayed an invincible repugnance to let things proceed to extremities.

Even in purely formal matters the Emperor was scrupulously considerate of Magyar susceptibilities. In Hungary he never wore any other uniform than that of a Hungarian field-marshal or the 1st Hussar Regiment, his own. He put on this uniform before leaving Vienna, so that he should be wearing it on his arrival at Budapest. On ceremonial occa-

sions in Hungary he always wore the ribbon of the Grand Cross of the Hungarian Order of St. Stephen and no other.

During the informal receptions that followed court banquets at Budapest he always conversed with the Hungarian guests in their own language even if he was well aware, as was generally the case, that they spoke German fluently.

He made a point of never hurting the feelings of the Hungarians, even in the smallest matters, but always did what he could to fall in with their wishes, even though his efforts were not always completely successful. The results were not always in the best interests of the Empire as a whole. The favour shown to Hungary had a disastrous effect on Austria for the turbulent Czechs especially not only regarded Hungary's prerogatives with suspicion but began to grow bolder in their demands for similar special privileges.

The Emperor realized the situation, but he could hardly help himself, especially as the Hungarians, or rather their representatives, began to address him in very different language from that he had been accustomed to in Austria. The Hungarian Ministers, politicians and deputies ceased to mince matters in addressing their King: they demanded, insisted, and even threatened. This frightened him, and he always gave way in the end for the sake of peace.

His action infuriated the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, whose eyes were not blinded; it was one of the causes of his growing estrangement from his uncle and his hatred of Hungary.

Owing to the influence of Hungary which was so powerful with the Emperor, he never succeeded in getting into closer touch with the non-Magyar nationalities of Cisleithania; he knew next to nothing of the Slovaks, the Hungarian Serbs and Rumanians, the Croats and Slavonians, or the Saxons of Transylvania. These races were cut off from their King; all legislation affecting them was the outcome of Hungarian

suggestion and it was therefore natural that these nationalities should gradually transfer to the Emperor the hatred they had long been nursing against the bullying Magyars. It was sad to see how, when some political or agrarian difficulty cropped up in Croatia, he would yield to pressure from the Budapest ministers and sanction the employment of repressive measures, forgetful or regardless of the fact that of all the peoples of the Empire, the Croats were always one of the most loyal to the Hapsburg throne. It was not surprising to an impartial observer that the Croats and the Serbs, their blood-relations, the Rumanians, and finally the Slovaks, should show a tendency to break away from the Hungarian Kingdom.

The Emperor's official Hungarian advisers had successfully impressed on his mind the pre-eminence of the Magyars. He ended by believing it and thought the Magyars superior to the other races of Hungary. This is proved by a remark he once made.

Every year, at the time of the grape-harvest, the Emperor used to receive a gift of splendid grapes from the nieces of the old revolutionary General Görgey, who was living in exile near Visegrad on the Danube. These he accepted with pleasure, sending a large box of sweets as a token of his gratitude. In the autumn of 1904 the Emperor happened to be at Gödöllö and the grapes were sent there from Visegrad. At dinner the conversation turned to the subject of General Görgey. The Emperor remarked that Görgey had already passed fifty-five years in exile, hated and scorned by his fellow-countrymen who could never forgive the capitulation of Vilagos. Then he added the following story : When Franz Deák was once staying in Budapest, Görgey begged him to put an end to the slanders of which he was the victim, and to make it clear to the Hungarians that it was only owing to his desperate situation that he had been forced to capitulate as he and his militia could not hope to hold out for days

against the tremendous superiority of the trained Austrian and Russian forces. Deák replied that he was well aware that that was true, and had never thought otherwise, but as a Magyar he must insist on leaving the Hungarians in the belief that they had only been defeated by treachery; that otherwise the Russians and Austrians would never have succeeded in breaking the courage of the invincible Hungarians. He therefore advised General Görgey to continue in exile and to find in his patriotism compensation for sacrificing his personal reputation for his Fatherland.

"And Görgey continued to keep silence and be forgotten; he suffered dumbly the burden of undeserved calumny and abuse," concluded the Emperor. "A nation possessing men who think like that must be great." So perhaps in spite of himself, the Emperor was still under the Magyar spell.

As I have already said in Chapter II. the Emperor Francis Joseph was a devout Catholic, holding fast to his hereditary faith. He hated bigotry, respected other creeds and never allowed himself to utter a word that might wound a non-Catholic. There were Protestants at his court and among his personal suite, and on all his journeys within his realms he never failed to visit, in addition to the Roman Catholic churches, those of the Greek and Protestant faiths as well as synagogues and mosques and even occasionally to attend their services. During his first and only journey to Bosnia and Herzegovina, in May, 1910, he followed the Mohammedan ritual in the mosques of Sarajevo and Mostar with a reverence which made the deepest impression on the faithful in that region.

At the receptions held by the Emperor in the different towns he visited the priests and clergy representing every religious denomination were invariably included. Once at Linz, in June, 1903, the rabbi, with raised hands, pronounced a long Hebrew benediction over the sovereign's head and he

stood in a reverential attitude until the end and then, obviousl touched, thanked the rabbi with the words :

" May the Almighty hear your prayer ; it was truly well meant."

Here I should like to mention the ancient custom of St. Martin's day when the Jewish community in Pressburg brought the Emperor some fat geese as a token of their regard. The gift was made with some ceremony, a Jewish delegate seeking an audience of the Emperor and presenting a dish on which were the geese plucked and dressed ready for table and decked with coloured ribbon.

Like his grandfather, the Emperor Francis I., Francis Joseph took a livelier interest in the practical side of life than any other ; science and art in particular appealed to him very little.

In art matters Frau Schratt gradually became the Emperor's right hand. Her influence was not always good. When she recommended painters, sculptors, musicians, actors, jewellers and cabinet makers she was far too frequently swayed by personal interests. The result was that the Emperor patronized some artists whose work was of quite ordinary merit, and certainly not worthy of the sovereign's special favour. During the life-time of the Empress, whose sure taste for the beautiful seems to have amounted almost to genius, things may have been different and much more satisfactory.

To be honest it must be confessed that at heart the Emperor cared very little for art. It was a sphere which had no interest for him. He attached no particular importance to it and for that reason was reluctant to devote to it any part of his time, which was already fully taken up. Even in the selection of *objets d'art* for presents he gave the senior gentleman-in-waiting a free hand. Of course these presents were dutifully submitted to him before they were sent but he usually confined himself to inspecting them and made no remark, commendatory or otherwise. Occasionally he

took special notice of the frames of the photographs he intended for different individuals though his interest was focussed less on the frames themselves than on the heraldic devices with which they were decorated.

For some considerable time these frames had the *Austrian* crown only at the top ; his initials and family coat-of-arms were engraved in the corners and at the sides. Of course this soon meant complaints in Hungarian quarters. At first the experiment was tried of having a special frame for the photographs intended for Hungarian dignitaries. These frames were similar in design and general appearance to the Austrian ones but had the Crown of St. Stephen at the top and in the corners the Emperor's Hungarian initials which differed from the Austrian in that the letter " I " appeared before the " F. J." and not after them as in the Emperor's Latin and German initials. The sending of these signed photographs to the donees was the province of my department and as this " dual " system occasionally led to complications I tried to solve the problem by inventing a single frame with the combined Austrian and Hungarian arms, supported by a golden griffin on one side and an angel in white and coloured enamel on the other. In alternate corners I placed the Austrian and Hungarian initials of the Emperor and the arms of the Imperial House on the two sides.

I put my sketch before the Emperor in the summer of 1905. He was quite reluctant even to examine it, kept it by him more than a week and finally informed Count Paar that the idea had his approval if the two coats-of-arms at the top and their supporters were removed and simply replaced by the Austrian imperial crown and Hungarian Stephen's crown.

There the matter remained as the Emperor had then remarked : " I should never think of making such a concession to Hungary in a purely private matter ! "

Great was my astonishment when, ten years later, a coat-

of-arms was introduced for all institutions common to both halves of the empire (e.g., the army), which was almost exactly like my sketch except that the family arms were in the centre and it had the device "Indivisibiliter ac Inseparabiliter" taken from the text of the Pragmatic Sanction!

But I must get back to my real subject. As I have said, Francis Joseph's nature prevented him having any real feeling for art.

Yet he always considered it one of his duties to do all he could to encourage and protect the arts. He never missed an art exhibition either in Vienna or Budapest, examining all the exhibits with surprising patience, and he would listen to a concert from beginning to end. He did this, however, much in the same way as he would have laid a foundation-stone or opened a building or railway. Duty was everything to the Emperor and it was his cheerful self-sacrifice on the altar of duty which gave him his wonderful power, even in his old age, of holding together the motley collection of peoples that made up the Austro-Hungarian Empire. That is the Emperor's greatest achievement. When dissension between individual nationalities broke out his patient mediation and single-minded influence always managed to pacify them, at any rate temporarily, for he always tried to do his best for everyone, and was always ready to exert himself unsparingly in such a cause.

The Emperor may not have succeeded in keeping his peoples unswervingly in the path of peace and prosperity, for such an ideal was beyond the limits of human capacity. But no one can doubt that he wanted to do so. It is shown not only by his exemplary devotion to duty, but still more by his boundless affection for the nations of his empire. To none of his ancestors could the words of brass graven on the base of the monument to Francis I. which stands in the inner court of the Hofburg in Vienna, be more fittingly applied:

"Amorem meum populis meis."

CHAPTER IX

FRANCIS JOSEPH'S FOREIGN RELATIONS

I HAVE already pointed out that the Emperor Francis Joseph was a *German* prince. I must repeat this here because it was the very foundation of his foreign policy, at any rate while I was in the service of Count Paar. Just as the Compromise with Hungary in 1867 was the basis of all his domestic policy, so the alliance with Germany in 1878 was the key to his foreign policy. The Emperor maintained this attitude with all the greater firmness and conviction because he regarded himself personally as a German.

For many years his faithful devotion to this policy was not an easy task for to the end of his life the Emperor could never really forget the events of 1866 and the final fall of the Hapsburg House from its former position of splendour as the ruling power of Germany. While his relations with the Emperor William I. had never been particularly cordial, the situation changed completely when, in June, 1888, the three months' reign of Frederick III. came to an end and the control of Germany's fate passed into the vigorous grasp of his son, the youthful Emperor William II.

William II. showed at once, and unmistakably, that he wished to regard the past as buried and looked forward to a future of close friendship with Austria-Hungary.

This frankness made a great impression on the Emperor Francis Joseph. He gripped the proffered hand and held it fast until the end of his life.

It is interesting to note that Count Paar thought Francis Joseph's partiality to William II. was based on the antagonism between the latter and Bismarck. Francis Joseph regarded Bismarck as his bitterest enemy. The events of the sixties had confirmed him in that view and his aversion was extended to William I. in whom he also saw one of his worst adversaries. Bismarck's deprecatory remark that William II. had inherited something of the qualities of all his ancestors since the first Prussian King, Frederick I., with the sole exception of his grandfather William I., at once disposed him in favour of William II.; he instinctively felt drawn towards him and it remained so to the end.

The alliance between the two Central-European powers was set upon a deeper and firmer foundation by this frank, personal affection which bound together the two sovereigns, and lasted, free from the slightest cloud, through nearly three decades.

While William II. looked up to Francis Joseph, a man much older than himself, with respectful, almost filial, affection, the latter was anxious to show the German Emperor how grateful he was. Though the Emperor Francis Joseph's natural reserve did not allow his warm regard for William II. to appear on the surface, anyone in close touch with him could see right down into the depths of his unshakable confidence and cordial sympathy. To this was added the Emperor's whole-hearted admiration for the tremendous development of Germany during the reign of William II., and his grateful recognition of the great achievements of the German nation in every sphere of modern life.

Both rulers spontaneously took every opportunity that offered of assuring one another of their deep mutual regard.

When on November 24th, 1900, I was present at the swearing-in of the naval recruits in the drill-hall of the Imperial dockyards at Kiel and presented myself to the Emperor

William II.—by his special command—the first words he addressed to me were :

" How is the Emperor ? Well, I hope. Did you see him before you left ? "

During the first few years of my service at court, William II. did not come to Vienna ; but it was only force of circumstances that prevented him from visiting Francis Joseph.

All the more memorable was the Emperor's visit to Berlin in May, 1900, for the coming-of-age celebrations of the German Crown Prince. On his return Francis Joseph definitely declared that in view of his advancing years this would be his last official visit abroad.

I should like to give special prominence to a remark of the Emperor Francis Joseph during the early years of my service at the court. In the spring of 1901 the sovereign had gone to Budapest and Gödöllö, and one evening the conversation turned to the subject of the South African war which had just ended. Someone at the table made a remark about the Emperor William's much discussed telegram to Krüger, President of the Transvaal, which might only too easily have been construed as a challenge to England. " That was not the meaning of the telegram at all," Francis Joseph interposed warmly. " It was merely a quite natural and human recognition of the incomparable bravery of the Dutch Boers. No other construction can be put upon it, *because I know only too well that the German Emperor's one thought is always the maintenance of peace.*"

Francis Joseph had the greatest confidence in William II.'s love of peace ; it seemed to him the sheet-anchor of Austria's destiny.

Strangely enough, my first experience of a meeting between the two monarchs was on foreign soil, at the funeral ceremonies of King Albert of Saxony in Dresden. King Albert was one of Francis Joseph's oldest and most esteemed friends and the

Emperor felt that he could not fail to be present personally to do him the last honours.

Francis Joseph arrived in Dresden on the morning of the funeral; William II. did not arrive until immediately before the ceremony. The greeting between the two monarchs was so warm that I have never forgotten it. It impressed me all the more as Francis Joseph had only paid quite perfunctory visits to the members of the Saxon Royal House during the morning and early afternoon and had taken very little notice of the numerous foreign princes present in Dresden, confining himself to a formal leaving of cards. He was waiting all day for William II., and until Francis Joseph's departure the two Emperors were never apart. William II. kept at the side of his faithful friend and when they were taking leave of one another the German Emperor called out:

"We will meet again soon in Vienna."

And Francis Joseph replied cordially:

"Yes, do come. It will give me great pleasure. The sooner you come the better I shall be pleased."

But it was not until September, 1903, that William II. came to the Hofburg in Vienna. Here the two monarchs reiterated their declarations of loyal friendship. This time they were all the more significant because Edward VII., the King of England, had recently been in Vienna as the guest of the Emperor Francis Joseph, and the Czar Nicholas II. of Russia was expected the following week in Schönbrunn and Mürzsteg.

One of the objects of this visit of William II. to Vienna was to display to the world the firmness of the alliance between Austria-Hungary and Germany. This was made clear not only by the personal intercourse of the two Emperors but by the toasts that they exchanged at table and the comments of the press of both countries on William's presence in Vienna.

My friend Major von Bülow, military attaché to the German Embassy in Vienna, said to me during this visit:

" We are on the eve of great happenings which at any moment may call for important decisions. That is why my Emperor's presence here was necessary to stiffen the backbone of the rulers of Austria-Hungary by personal conference and, if necessary, to keep them up to the scratch." Bülow was referring to the assassination of the King and Queen of Serbia in Belgrade in the night of the 13th June, 1903, which, as he emphatically asserted at the time in Vienna, should have been followed by an immediate invasion of Serbia by Austro-Hungarian troops, and the occupation of Belgrade and all important places on the right banks of the Danube and the Save so that the Hapsburg Monarchy would have the deciding voice in future developments. When the Foreign Minister, Count Goluchowski, did nothing and left Serbia an absolutely free hand, Bülow could scarcely contain his anger and coined the *mauvais mot* which had a long run in Viennese society : " Goluchowski has even slept through the loudest call of modern times."

In connection with this visit of the German Emperor to Vienna I may mention that, as was the case with all official visits of foreign potentates to Vienna, everything down to the slightest detail was carried through according to a programme drawn up beforehand by the Controller of the Household's department in co-operation with the court in question (or through its representatives in Vienna), and approved by the Emperor ; it was then printed and forwarded to all places and persons concerned. Once approved this programme was unalterable ; it covered the whole visit from the moment of arrival to the moment of departure, contained detailed instructions on every point, as, for instance, the quartering of the suite and servants ; in short, nothing was left to chance.

The precision with which these programmes were drawn up and carried through at the court of Vienna was justly famed throughout the world ; there were no questions, no flurry, and mistakes were simply unheard of.

Nearly three years passed before the German Emperor again came to the Vienna Hofburg in June, 1906.

Meanwhile the Russo-Japanese war had begun and ended and left innumerable burning questions of world politics to be settled up. In August, 1905, King Edward VII. had been to Ischl in order (as I heard definitely from the members of his suite) to make tangible proposals to the Emperor Francis Joseph with a view to loosening the alliance with Germany. The obvious reason for this was that at the end of October, 1904, the idea of an entente between Russia, Germany and France against possible threats or aggression on the part of England and Japan, had been considered by the Emperors William II. and Nicholas II. It was on account of this tentative proposal that France had suddenly dropped the acknowledged champion of the Anglo-French alliance, Delcassé, a step which had caused the German Emperor and the Czar to regard the project of a continental ring against England as opportune. Edward VII. was exerting himself deliberately to secure the isolation of Germany and began by bringing pressure to bear on the Emperor Francis Joseph. In Ischl he met with no success, but on the other hand during the following winter, he induced France to refuse to join a Russo-German coalition and at the same time persuaded Russia to turn her back on Germany and ally herself with the western powers. Naturally Francis Joseph expected that the Emperor William would bestir himself, in fact, whatever men may say, he needed the direct support of his ally to meet the further advances of Edward VII. with the necessary determination.

This was why the visit to Vienna in June, 1906, when another brilliant reception was prepared for William II., announced unmistakably to the world the firmness of the alliance between Germany and the Danube Monarchy.

The importance that Francis Joseph attached to it is apparent from a conversation between the Emperor and his

The Duchess of Hohenberg, Wife of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand.

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daughter, Princess Gisela of Bavaria, in the course of which he said : " It has done me good to shake hands once more with the Emperor : in the present times, peaceful on the surface but stormy below, we cannot meet too often to assure each other, eye to eye, *how sincerely we both desire peace and peace alone*. In this endeavour we can indeed rely on mutual *loyalty*. *He would no more think of leaving me in the lurch than I him*."

And when, on the sunny spring morning of the 7th May, 1908, William II. arrived at Schönbrunn, at the head of all the princes of the Federation with the exception of the Grand Duke of Hesse—and accompanied by the mayor of Hamburg, to bring Germany's congratulations on the Emperor's diamond jubilee, he gave utterance to a declaration of allegiance almost unprecedented in its sincerity and eloquence. Nothing could have given his aged ally greater happiness. Many years afterwards the Emperor recalled this moving moment, even in the middle of the world war, when Field-Marshal von Mackensen stopped in Vienna on his way to Serbia in September, 1915, and a luncheon was given in his honour at Schönbrunn. He referred to this speech with obvious emotion : " It was a splendid moment, perhaps the most splendid of my life. At any rate the last happy one, for since then nothing but evil has befallen us."

After this sincere expression of congratulation and good wishes by the Emperor William on behalf of the German princes, there set in for the Emperor Francis Joseph a period of trial which lasted almost without interruption until the end of his life.

On the 9th June, 1908, came the meeting of Edward VII. and Nicholas II. at Reval to determine the attitude of England and Russia to the Balkan question so that the English king could close the ring round Germany. Whether Austria-Hungary was to be drawn into this ring that far-sighted diplomat, Edward VII., left to the decision of Francis Joseph.

In August, 1908, he again came—for the last time—to Ischl and categorically called upon the Emperor to declare himself either for or against England.

Francis Joseph remained unswervingly faithful to the alliance with Germany.

The consequences of this were soon felt in Austria; the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in August, 1908, brought the first of those difficult and dangerous crises which were to find their terrible final solution six years later in the world war. The unreserved mutual trust and unshakable friendship of the Emperors Francis Joseph and William enabled them in May, 1909, after many efforts, once again to clear the political horizon of Europe. Accompanied by the Empress Augusta Victoria, William II. a few weeks later appeared in Vienna and this time was greeted, not only by his old friend and ally, but by the entire population of Vienna with almost unprecedented warmth and enthusiasm. Since his last visit Francis Joseph had been very lonely, and he pressed his trusted ally to come to the grand manœuvres in Moravia so that he might soon have the pleasure of his company once more.

Accordingly, in September, 1909, William II. was a guest of Manœuvre Head Quarters at Gross-Meseritsch. He came with a large and brilliant suite. They were the last manœuvres attended by the Emperor Francis Joseph. Whether he had a premonition of this, or was depressed by the fact that the anniversary of the Empress Elizabeth's death—the 10th September—fell during the manœuvres, or by the unedifying spectacle that Conrad's new system must have presented to the German Emperor, his mood was this time quite different from what was usual when he was with William II. The old monarch was taciturn, monosyllabic, gloomy; not until the leave-taking did his usual cordiality return. During these days it struck me that his mind was elsewhere.

Be this as it may, he was by no means cheerful, especially on the tragic anniversary. In the early morning a mass for the

dead was said in the castle of Gross-Meseritsch in the Emperor's presence. The Emperor William, with his staff, had meanwhile gone on to the manœuvre ground, whither Francis Joseph followed him after the mass.

As the ordinary dinner in the court dining tent was fixed for the late afternoon, a substantial hot lunch was provided by the court kitchen for the German Emperor and his suite on the manœuvre field. This arrangement did not at all please Francis Joseph, who cared little for creature comforts and always liked to appear before his troops as soldier and sovereign *only*. It may have contributed to increase his ill-humour.

Scarcely had the two Emperors met on the manœuvre ground when several waggons belonging to the court kitchen appeared and began to unpack; a tent was pitched and a small, well-laden table set up. As soon as Francis Joseph saw these preparations he took a hurried leave of the Emperor William and rode off with his staff, to which I belonged. When out of hearing of the Germans the old Emperor turned to us and said with a brusqueness which was quite unusual to him, "Let's get out of this; this feast business is not for us," and set off at a gallop across country, over stubble and ploughed fields.

The two monarchs did not meet again that day until the dinner in the afternoon; even then Francis Joseph sat silent and brooding and hardly took any part in the conversation. I was sorry to see a more or less innocent and harmless affair produce such an atmosphere of discord. On the following day Francis Joseph was again in good spirits, and when he took leave of William II. at the end of the manœuvres the customary cordiality had returned and once more the old Emperor, with tears in his eyes, called out to his departing guest: "We must meet again soon, very soon."

A month after the Emperor Francis Joseph had celebrated his eightieth birthday, William II. came to Schönbrunn on the 20th September with the Empress and three of his sons

to congratulate his old friend and ally in person. The visit lasted several days and was the last official visit of the German Emperor to Vienna.

One of the most noteworthy features of this visit was the ceremonious reception of the German Emperor by the municipal council in the Vienna Rathaus. In reply to a toast of welcome William II. made the famous speech in which he referred to the dangers that threatened from every side and alluded, in what have since become winged words, to " shining armour." All Vienna was thrilled.

Francis Joseph alone did not share the universal enthusiasm ; the speech of the Emperor William was by no means to his liking. He revealed his anxiety to a small and intimate circle : " It is to be hoped that the German Emperor's temperament is not getting the better of him again. As a matter of fact he is just as anxious to maintain peace as I, but this bold boasting about the sharpness of the German sword seems to me dangerous. In countries where feeling is unfriendly to us—that means almost everywhere—such words may only too easily be misunderstood or deliberately misconstrued. Europe to-day is like a powder cask ; we must be careful and not scatter sparks about carelessly."

This is the secret of the great difference between these two monarchs ; Francis Joseph, cautious, moderate, solitary, never coming out of himself, watching the course of events from a position doubtless too far removed from the world, and scarcely ever exploiting unhesitatingly the opportunities they offered ; William II., impulsive, full of initiative, self-reliant, taking much, possibly too much, into his own unaided hands, constantly and unhesitatingly throwing in his own personality to turn the scale. Theoretically there was justification for the conclusion that Francis Joseph I. and William II. were an ideal complement to each other and that the firm, loyal alliance of these two rulers—it was certainly that—seemed destined to secure for Europe the strongest

safeguard against any violent storm that the troubled times might bring. In practice the results were the exact opposite. The Emperors Francis Joseph and William led their empires into the titanic world struggle from which they emerged, the one overthrown and humiliated, the other no longer a composite state but a heap of ruins. Why ?—To this question I give the following answer, based rather on intuition than deliberate reflection : Francis Joseph I. had always regarded the Hapsburg monarchy as the pre-eminent German state of Central Europe, a position it had held in the fifties of the past century, or in the Metternich era, but from which it had long since fallen, while William II. saw in Germany the greatest power of the Old World, perhaps even of the whole world, a position it had not yet by any means attained.

Francis Joseph's long years of bitter, varied experience made him inclined to suspect that the Emperor William might be carrying his ideas too far, and so exposing himself to a disaster which would shatter not only his own dreams, but those of his ally also. Hence his pretty frank denunciation of William II.'s ardent speech in the Vienna Rathaus, which, together with the splendour of the German Emperor's visit in September, 1910, was long discussed in the Austrian capital with the greatest enthusiasm.

Thus the autumn and winter passed, and in the spring of 1911 Francis Joseph was attacked by such virulent and stubborn bronchial catarrh that only after a sharp struggle was the rapidly increasing severity of his illness checked, and the aged Emperor kept alive. As the malady left behind it permanent ill-effects it became necessary to take special care of the Emperor, and William II. was the first to bear that necessity in mind during his next visit to Schönbrunn.

Henceforward, until the outbreak of the war, the Emperor William II. came every year to Vienna, but always quite privately, and always insisted on the absence of any court

ceremony. As he used to say he wanted " to say good morning to the Emperor and nothing else." These visits gave the Emperors opportunity for long confidential talks. These were all the more necessary for Francis Joseph as the political horizon was yearly growing darker and darker for the allies, and the terrible happenings we have lately witnessed were already beginning to cast their dark shadows before them.

According to my own observation the Emperor William's love of his family, trust in God and loyalty were the qualities which endeared him to Francis Joseph ; I was unable to discover what was the Emperor's opinion of the other characteristics of William II., what he thought of his capacity as a ruler, his mental gifts and leadership. In the endeavour to obtain information I questioned Count Paar directly on this subject at Christmas, 1915. The Count had deservedly enjoyed the Emperor's confidence for more than a quarter of a century and would therefore know.

He answered meditatively : " This is not the first time I have been asked the question, and I have never been able to give an answer, for the Emperor has never spoken of the Emperor William's capacities, opinions, plans or intentions. But one thing is certain : *The Emperor William is far more sympathetic to Francis Joseph than any other sovereign with whom he has had personal relations, and I can further assure you that our Emperor has full confidence in the Emperor of Germany. With the Emperor Francis Joseph that is saying a great deal.*"

All this meant that the influence of William II. was continually gaining ground until at last Francis Joseph scarcely dared to take a single step in foreign politics without first consulting the opinion of his friend. This state of things was not regarded with universal favour in Vienna ; but it met with more approval in Budapest where the forcefulness of William II. was admired. The leading Protestant circles of Hungary, who felt themselves drawn towards him by

religious ties, thought they had found in the German Emperor a patron particularly favourable to their interests. In the immediate entourage of the Austrian Emperor this dependence on Berlin, which was yearly becoming more marked, was not approved of, especially by Count Paar. I heard him several times say angrily :

" We're no longer capable of independent action ; everything has to go as the wire-pullers in Potsdam wish." Paar was always afraid that this system would become dangerous to Austria and might compromise her future. Was not this opinion ultimately proved right ?

There is no doubt that this feeling of loyal friendship between the two monarchs was shared by their families. The German Crown Prince and in later years his wife also were frequent guests at the Vienna Hofburg, and the Emperor Francis Joseph was always cordial and attentive to the pair. For a time a rumour was current that the Emperor had hoped to see his granddaughter Elizabeth Marie, the only child of Crown Prince Rudolph, married to the German Crown Prince. I never really believed it, if only because Francis Joseph knew his granddaughter too well to imagine that she was well suited to be the wife of the German Crown Prince and future Empress of Germany.

The Emperor was exceptionally fond of Prince Joachim, his godson. Among the more distant relatives of the German Emperor, Prince Albrecht of Prussia, for many years Regent of the Duchy of Brunswick, found great favour with the Emperor. When Prince Albrecht died, Francis Joseph telegraphed to his son messages of heartfelt sympathy, in which he gave eloquent expression of his deep affection for the deceased prince. In addition the Emperor sent his son-in-law, the Archduke Francis Salvator, to represent him at the funeral, together with a strong detachment of officers of the 6th Austro-Hungarian Dragoon Regiment of which Prince Albrecht had been colonel.

And so countless threads were spun between the Hapsburgs and Hohenzollerns, and it was only religious differences which prevented the two Imperial houses from further strengthening their alliance by intermarriage.

It was otherwise in the case of the other German royal houses, of which the most important was Bavaria.

Francis Joseph's mother, the Archduchess Sophia, had been a Bavarian Princess and the Emperor's wife, the Empress Elizabeth, was a Bavarian Duchess. Further, the Emperor's eldest daughter Gisela had married Prince Leopold of Bavaria, son of the Prince Regent Luitpold and brother of King Louis III. The house of Wittelsbach therefore held a high place in the Emperor's regard. His affection for it was usually expressed privately, but for that reason was all the more notorious. The Prince Regent Luitpold enjoyed the Emperor's special regard, although his nature tended to make him averse rather than partial to demonstrations of affection, particularly as he was more than nine years older than the Emperor. The latter did not allow himself to be put off by the Prince Regent's curious manner. For instance, when Prince Luitpold celebrated his eightieth birthday in March, 1901 in the bosom of his family, the Emperor did not wait for an invitation but simply travelled incognito to Munich, where his welcome was all the more hearty.

The Prince Regent had for years been in the habit of spending a few weeks in the spring with his sister, the Duchess Adelgunde of Modena, in Vienna. Scarcely had the Prince Regent arrived when the Emperor would hasten to see him in the palace in the Beatrixgasse. This first visit would be followed by others of an equally informal nature, an informality which also characterized the dinners given in honour of the Prince Regent at Schönbrunn.

The Emperor also had feelings of a sincere friendship for the Prince Regent's son, afterwards King Louis III. of Bavaria, and I repeatedly noticed that whenever the character

of that prince was under discussion the Emperor at once intervened to praise his culture and kindly nature.

The Emperor was not particularly attached to the Duke Charles Theodore, his brother-in-law, nor to the duke's sister, the Countess von Trani. On the other hand the monarch came under the spell of her second sister Marie, the once beautiful Queen of Naples, who bore such a striking resemblance to the Empress Elizabeth. The personality of this witty and energetic woman, who bore her misfortunes with such proud dignity, won the Emperor's whole-hearted admiration. Several times I heard him say that he could never speak too highly of her courage and heroism during the defence of Gaeta in the spring of 1860, her selfless devotion during all the subsequent disasters, and the loving care with which for many years she tended and supported her royal husband, broken down by countless adversities. On this subject the Emperor would wax enthusiastic in a way quite rare with him. I particularly remember on one occasion, at Gödöllö, when after a visit from the Countess von Trani, the conversation turned to her sister Queen Marie.

"These infernal inelastic statutes of my military Maria-Theresa order," declared the Emperor, "won't allow me to follow the example set by the Emperor Alexander II. of Russia forty years ago, when he bestowed the order of Saint George on my sister-in-law Marie. How dearly I should have liked to pin the Maria-Theresa order on her breast. For this unique and splendid woman deserves quite exceptional honours."

In spite of the many family connections that united the houses of Hapsburg and Wettin, the Emperor—at any rate during my period of service—had ceased to feel any particular regard for the Saxon court since his old and trusted friend King Albert died and the latter's brother and successor, King George, a few months after his accession, became involved in the unedifying scandal which followed the flight

of his daughter-in-law, the Crown-Princess Louise, which caused such a sensation. Thanks, probably, to the influence of his eldest daughter, Princess Mathilde, he proved quite unequal to coping with the situation, and the way he handled it gave the whole incident a most unpleasant notoriety. This want of tact annoyed the Emperor deeply; he regarded King George's conduct as derogatory to the dignity of the dynasty, and naturally would have nothing further to do with him.

The only time the Emperor visited him was when King George was taking a cure at Gastein in August, 1904. The meeting of the two rulers—the Emperor only remained a few hours in Gastein—was anything but cordial; it left the impression that the Emperor and King had nothing at all to say to each other. No doubt King George's condition at that time was critical. Death had already set its mark upon him. It was not until the return journey that the Emperor regained his lost spirits.

"The King is dying," said the Emperor. "He will not survive the winter. He's an old and broken man. Why didn't he renounce the throne? His son would have succeeded, and this ghastly scandal about Louise would have been avoided. And what a mess he made of it! It was ignominious! Dirty linen should be washed at home, not in public. Such things can only happen where things are run by a sour old spinster like Princess Mathilde. They can never go right where hatred and lust for revenge take the place of intelligence and kindness."

King George's sons, the prince who became King Frederick Augustus III. and Prince John George, displeased the Emperor Francis Joseph by their overbearing manner, and the Emperor, as I know from occasional remarks I overheard, thought little of their brains. As early as July, 1902, when Frederick Augustus, then Crown Prince, visited Ischl on an official mission as the representative of his royal father, it was easy to see

that the Emperor had no high opinion of him. Though he treated the Saxon Crown Prince with all necessary civility, that was as far as he got. This reminds me of a little incident that occurred at dinner in the Imperial villa at Ischl on the day of the Crown Prince's arrival. Frederick Augustus was in the habit of talking in a very loud and rasping voice which contrasted violently with the quiet, subdued talk of the other guests. The Saxon Crown Prince adopted this tone even when conversing with the Emperor. All at once the old monarch turned to him and said brusquely:

"Why do you shout so? I'm not deaf." This sharp reproof, administered in a tone and with an expression very uncommon with Francis Joseph, usually a model of courtesy, quite surprised those who knew him.

In speaking of the Emperor's relations with the Würtemberg court one must distinguish clearly between the Protestant royal house and that of the Catholic dukes. The latter were closely related by birth and marriage with the Hapsburgs, so that naturally its members were in close and constant touch with the old sovereign.

On the other hand, at any rate in my time, the Emperor very rarely met the King and Queen of Würtemberg.

But something must also have happened earlier on to make the relations between the Emperor and the King of Würtemberg somewhat strained. Count Paar, whom I questioned on this subject, thought that the estrangement might date back to February, 1893, when the King of Würtemberg paid an official visit to Vienna for the marriage of Duke Albrecht to the Archduchess Margaret Sophia, a daughter of the Archduke Charles Louis. That visit was never returned at Stuttgart by the Emperor. The King never forgave Francis Joseph.

This may certainly be the true explanation.

While the Emperor Francis Joseph scarcely ever came into contact with the Grand Duke of Baden he was very

fond of his very intelligent nephew, Prince Max of Baden, as well as his wife, the eldest daughter of the Duke of Cumberland, whom the Emperor had known from her childhood. Accompanied by her delightful children she spent a few weeks nearly every summer with her parents at Gmunden and was very often a favourite guest of the Emperor at Ischl, as also was the Duke of Cumberland's second daughter, the wife of the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

To them Francis Joseph extended the feelings of close friendship he felt for Duke Ernest Augustus of Cumberland. The latter, after his father King George V. of Hanover had abdicated in 1866 the victim of his stubborn loyalty to the alliance with Austria, lived until his death partly in his splendid Austrian castle at Gmunden, partly at his Vienna palace—known as "Lothringerhaus"—near Schönbrunn. His wife, Queen Marie, and his son, the Duke of Cumberland, who had married the youngest daughter of King Christian IX. of Denmark, lived with him.

The Emperor therefore regarded it as an obligation of honour to be extremely cordial to the Duke of Cumberland and his family, and their close proximity gave every opportunity for constant meetings between the Guelphs and Hapsburgs. At nearly every court ceremony at which the Cumberland family appeared in Vienna the Emperor took the Duchess in on his arm, and he never neglected an opportunity of showing his exceptional regard and cordial friendship for the Duke.

Duke Ernest Augustus regarded himself as a real Austrian; Vienna and Gmunden had become his second home; he always wore the uniform of the 42nd Infantry Regiment, with the small cross of the military division of the Maria-Theresa order which he had worn as Crown Prince of Hanover in 1866, in the fierce battle of Langensalza.

As the Emperor Francis Joseph was on the best possible terms with both the Emperor William II. and the Duke of

Cumberland, it often troubled him to see these two estranged as a result of past events, and for years he made efforts to pave the way to reconciliation. At last, in 1913, the bitter feud that had lasted for nearly half a century between the Guelphs and the Hohenzollerns was happily terminated.

Soon after the tragic death of his elder brother as the result of a motor accident, the Duke's son, Prince Ernest Augustus, now the only male heir to the Dukedom, married Princess Victoria Louise, the only daughter of the German Emperor and Empress. On the day of the marriage he received Brunswick, the Guelphs' second home, from his Imperial father-in-law as his wedding gift. As Prince he already bore its ducal title. Francis Joseph could not conceal his satisfaction at this unexpectedly happy result; he exchanged telegrams and letters of congratulation couched in the warmest terms with the German Emperor and Empress and the family of the Duke of Cumberland to express his pleasure at the termination of the unhappy feud.

This reconciliation of his two friends had been one of the Emperor's dearest wishes, and nothing had given him so much pleasure for years as the visit to the Emperor's villa at Ischl of the young Duke of Brunswick with his charming bride during their summer visit to Gmunden. They were accompanied by the Duke's parents with their unmarried youngest daughter Princess Olga.

But once again Providence saw fit to mar a happy occasion with evil tidings. For the day on which the visit took place was the fateful 25th July, 1914. Scarcely had the Duke of Brunswick with his wife and the family of the Duke of Cumberland left Ischl when the news arrived that Serbia had rejected the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum so that the world war was inevitable.

I must mention here that Francis Joseph had great hopes of the young Duke Ernest Augustus of Brunswick. From many remarks he made it was obvious that he thought there

was a brilliant future in store for the Duke. I was never able to explain on what these hopes were built for I was convinced that the great days of Guelph rule had departed never to return. I once said as much to Count Paar, who replied:

"The Emperor takes a very different view. He is always saying that although the Guelphs are now beneath and the Hohenzollerns on top, this situation may one day be reversed. I'm not at all clear as to how that's to come about but he insists that as the senior German princely house, the Guelphs have still an important part to play in the future."

I even gradually acquired the impression that the Emperor did not think it impossible that a Guelph might one day again wear the German imperial crown. He saw great danger to the Hohenzollerns in their growing hostility to the western powers and Russia. Such views—before the world war—were unquestionably very remarkable. But they were the Emperor's.

With the other German Princes the Emperor's relations were confined to the formal visits they paid him in Vienna.

It had become the custom for the German Imperial Chancellors to present themselves personally to the Emperor Francis Joseph when in Vienna, and when important events were happening to have an audience of him. Prince Bülow and Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg were both received in this way and the Emperor took the opportunity for a prolonged discussion of the political situation.

It goes without saying that the Emperor's friendly feelings for Germany were reflected in his relations with the German representatives in Vienna. The German ambassadors in Vienna enjoyed a particularly advantageous position with the Emperor. They were always specially selected for this post, for the Emperor William only trusted the appointment to men who enjoyed his closest confidence, Prince Eulenburg, Cavalry-General Count Wedel and finally Herr

von Tschirschky-Bögendorff. Of these Count Wedel was the most highly esteemed by the Austrian Emperor. The distinguished, serious-minded general with his reserved, straightforward manner was very much to Francis Joseph's liking. The fact that he was a soldier also made him more congenial to the monarch than his predecessor and successor.

Herr von Tschirschky contrived to acquire such an influence in Vienna that, according to Count Paar, it became impossible to decide anything without the consent of Berlin. To-day it is frequently said that Tschirschky worked independently of Berlin and forced his own political ideas upon the Ballhausplatz. It is certain that during the period of crisis beginning in 1908, and especially in 1914, he brought heavy pressure to bear on Austria in favour of extreme severity towards Serbia. As he was Germany's official representative in Vienna, however, his views were supposed to embody the principles which Germany officially desired the Austro-Hungarian Government and diplomats to observe. But it seems to be accepted now that he was working for his own hand, and that the opinion in Berlin was against making our demands too severe.

The situation unfortunately does not appear to have been realized by the Emperor Francis Joseph until it was too late. After the outbreak of war there was a distinct waning of the Emperor's confidence in the German Ambassador, and when the discussion of important questions was necessary the Emperor William sent special representatives to Vienna. It was, of course, a slight to Tschirschky. Depressed and a prey to physical suffering, he died in the Austrian capital a few days before the Emperor.

Francis Joseph was often the guest of the German Embassy, especially during the time when Prince Eulenburg and Count Wedel were in office; these were informal visits which the Emperor rarely paid to any other of the foreign embassies in the capital. In particular the Emperor never

failed to visit the German Ambassador every year on January 27, the birthday of the Emperor William II., to offer his personal congratulations to the German Emperor. He always wore the full dress uniform of a Prussian Field-Marshal. In addition he used to send a telegram of congratulation to William II., and in the evening a brilliant banquet was held in the Hofburg in Vienna, or at Schönbrunn, during which the Emperor emptied a glass of champagne to his friend and ally.

The Military Attachés to the German Embassy in Vienna, as well as the Naval Attachés, also received special proofs of the Emperor's favour whenever occasion offered. In accordance with a custom which dated from the days of the Holy Alliance, the German Military Attaché in Vienna was always one of the German Emperor's aides-de-camp and the Austro-Hungarian Military Attaché in Berlin had to be an aide-de-camp of the Emperor Francis Joseph. The arrangement was meant to emphasize not only the intimacy of the relations between the two rulers but also the close connection between the military attaché and his own sovereign and thus the importance of his mission to the sovereign to whom he was accredited.

In my time Major von Bülow, and subsequently Major Count von Kageneck, were the military attachés to the German Embassy in Vienna. Major Karl Ulrich von Bülow, a brother of the Imperial Chancellor, Prince Bernhard von Bülow, was deservedly very highly thought of by the Emperor himself and those leading military circles in Austria-Hungary to which he often proved himself a sound and valuable adviser.

His successor, Count von Kageneck, was able to strengthen and consolidate the close relations which Major von Bülow had established with all the high functionaries in Vienna. He also made himself a really prominent place as one of the most popular men in Viennese society. Kageneck was

a Catholic and came from Baden. His natural South-German affability, so highly congenial to the Austrian temperament, made him seem simply cut out for his post. His wife, the daughter of Baron von Schorlemer-Lieser, Prussian Minister of Agriculture, contributed not a little to make his position one of the most influential in Vienna.

There was still another link between Francis Joseph and the German Empire.

He held the rank of a Prussian Field-Marshal, Colonel-in-Chief of the Prussian 2nd Kaiser Franz Grenadier Guards and the 16th Prussian Hussars (Schleswig-Holstein); he was a member of the Bavarian 13th Infantry Regiment, Colonel-in-Chief of the Saxon 2nd Uhlan Regiment No. 15, and of the Würtemberg 4th Rifle Regiment No. 122.

There was an old established custom that in all these corps not only was every change of command announced to the Emperor Francis Joseph in writing, but the newly appointed commanding officer presented himself in person to him. On these occasions he would bestow decorations on both the newly appointed and retiring officers.

At his fifty years' Jubilee, which coincided with his Jubilee as Colonel of the 2nd Kaiser Franz Grenadier Guards, the Emperor had a special medal struck, representing himself in the uniform of the regiment, and this he had distributed in silver to all officers and in bronze to all non-commissioned officers of the regiment. The same thing happened in 1901 on the fiftieth anniversary of the Emperor's appointment to the 13th Bavarian Infantry Regiment.

At his Diamond Jubilee a special medal was struck for all his foreign regiments, even the non-German ones, and presented in silver to the officers and in bronze to the non-commissioned officers. These medals were also presented in gold to all sovereigns in whose armies the Emperor held rank and to all Field-Marshals of those armies, to wit, the Prussian, Russian and British.

Whenever there was an opportunity for wearing German uniform Francis Joseph donned it willingly for he thought it suited him and once smilingly remarked he considered he looked better in it than in Austrian uniform. In view of his passion for accuracy and correctness it was essential to see that his foreign uniforms should be in accordance with the latest regulations down to the slightest detail. The Emperor would not allow the least infringement. This, of course, involved very considerable expenditure which was no slight drain on his annual budget.

I specially remember one incident in connection with the Emperor's Prussian uniforms. According to regulations the Knights of the Prussian Order of the Black Eagle wore the insignia of the Grand Cross of the Order of the Red Eagle round the neck (*en sautoir*). The latter order, however, was not founded by William I. until 1861, when the Emperor Francis Joseph had already possessed the Order of the Black Eagle for fifteen years. He therefore added to the Order of the Black Eagle—which consists of a star and Grand Cross ribbon with insignia only*—the cross of the Order of the Red Eagle, first class, founded by King Frederick William III. This method of wearing the order made a striking combination which was worn by no one else. Francis Joseph loved to explain it to those who seemed surprised at it, and to point out that he was the only man who could wear the orders in that way. I once heard him, at a court banquet, add jestingly: "I'm so old, so very old, that I'm no longer affected by regulations which were issued when my guests were in their cradles or not even born."

In the pre-war period Austria-Hungary's second ally

* In exceptional cases a chain was added. The Emperor Francis Joseph did not wear this because, when in Prussian uniform, he always wore the chain of the Order of the Royal House of Hohenzollern. This was an exceptionally rare order, which was reserved for the princes of the house of Hohenzollern and a very few other princes closely connected with it.

was Italy. The Emperor's relations with this state could not be very intimate because he did not know the Italian sovereign, King Victor Emmanuel III. In September, 1898, Victor Emmanuel—then Prince of Naples—represented his royal father at the funeral of the Empress Elizabeth, and on this occasion of course met the Emperor Francis Joseph. But owing to the very nature of the occasion and the presence of numerous sovereigns and royal personages in Vienna, which claimed the old monarch's time and attention completely, he had a very inadequate opportunity for close conversation with the Italian heir or for forming his own opinion of the prince's personality. Such an opportunity, especially in the case of Victor Emmanuel III., would certainly have been welcomed by the Emperor.

Another obstacle that prevented the Emperor from getting to know him better was the principle he conscientiously observed that a Catholic sovereign could not visit the King of Italy in his capital, Rome, without inflicting a slight on the Papal Curia. This consideration had already prevented him from returning the visit of King Humbert and Queen Margherita to Vienna, an omission which naturally led to less cordial relations between the two ruling houses.

King Humbert's tragic end hit the old monarch very hard. "He was a martyr in the highest sense of the word," I heard him say about the dead monarch. "The Italians have good reason to hold him in honourable memory for he seemed in every way a worthy son of his great father. The latter was my political enemy, it is true, but I am the first to recognize that he was always an honourable foe." With a sigh Francis Joseph added quietly: "But he had far-sighted and able colleagues." The complaint that he himself had hardly been so fortunate was not expressed, but was implied only too plainly in these words.

In the same way the Emperor Francis Joseph extended his whole-hearted respect to King Victor Emmanuel III., and

there is no room for doubt that the Emperor deeply regretted the lack of an opportunity to prove it to the King himself. The earnestness and dignity with which Victor Emmanuel III. took up his mission as a ruler, the zeal with which he fulfilled all his duties in the interests of his people, and, last but not least, his exemplary family life, won the admiration of Francis Joseph. The Emperor was also deeply gratified that Victor Emmanuel III. regarded himself as belonging body and soul to his army and—like the Emperor himself—always wore military uniform. It had been otherwise with King Humbert, although the latter had in his time distinguished himself as a soldier on Italy's battlefields. There was something else about King Victor Emmanuel III. which the Emperor could never praise too highly, I mean his deep personal religious feeling and the consummate tact with which he mastered the difficulties of his position with regard to the Vatican. Francis Joseph thought that the Holy Father ought to regard it as a specially happy stroke of fate that thanks to the conciliatory delicacy of feeling of King Victor Emmanuel he was able to preserve the status of the Vatican unimpaired and without any loss of dignity or prestige. The Emperor inclined to the view that neither Pope Pius X. nor his secretary-of-state, Merry del Val, appreciated this as it deserved. "They are doing a great wrong, which I feel all the more as I always hold that the relations of the Curia to Italy should take into account a situation that has become a *fait accompli* and as such must be accepted," the Emperor concluded.

During this conversation, which took place at the luncheon-table during the Emperor's visit to Gödöllö in 1911, he made another remark which showed unmistakably what a close observer Francis Joseph had always been. His vigilant eye never missed the slightest detail, however obscure and unimportant it might be. In the course of the above conversation one of the guests had timidly ventured the remark

that in many circles both King Victor Emmanuel III. and his father were believed to be free-thinkers and that it was a mistake to credit him with definite leanings towards the Church of Rome. The old Emperor shook his head and replied with complete conviction: "I don't believe it, and never shall. Even if I had no other urgent grounds for believing in the religious sincerity of the King of Italy, one fact, of no great weight and hardly conclusive in itself, perhaps, would reassure me. Quite lately I happened to have in my hands the King's photograph, and it did not escape me that he was wearing on his uniform the Cross of the Order of Malta, as well as the Grand Cross stars of the Italian Orders. The former is a religious, in a certain sense a spiritual brotherhood. If the King attaches importance to his membership of this Order, and shows it publicly, one must suppose that he regards himself as a son of the Catholic Church. To me this is quite convincing."

With the death of King Humbert, a son of the Archduchess Maria Adelaide, sister of the Archduke Rainer, the family connection between the two courts, which had once been closely related by intermarriage, came to an end. The younger generations, hampered by political and international friction, had refrained from further intermarriage.

In spite of this the Emperor Francis Joseph, whenever an opportunity arose, lost no chance of showing that he would have been only too willing to see the formal alliance between the two nations supported by sentimental ties.

When, in August, 1907, the Italian Foreign Minister, Tittoni, was invited to present himself personally at Ischl by the Emperor, both he and the Chief of the Cabinet, Bollati, were surprised by the extraordinary attentions which the Emperor showed them; it was the same in July, 1912, when the Italian Foreign Minister, the Marquis di San Giuliano, visited the Emperor, also at Ischl.

In August, 1913, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary

celebrations of the Military Academy, which had been moved from Vienna to Mödling, the Italian general, Caneva, once a pupil of the Academy, was invited to be present at the express wish of the Emperor. Francis Joseph received him in audience at Ischl, decorated him with the Grand Cross of the Order of St. Stephen—the highest honour, except the Order of the Golden Fleece, which the sovereign could bestow—and invited him to the family table, where he sat at the Emperor's right hand.

The Italian ambassadors in Vienna, Count Nigra and Duke Avarna, were received with special honour by the Emperor. He had a particularly high opinion of Count Nigra, who enjoyed his special confidence.

Of course, the Military Attachés to the Italian Embassy in Vienna could not have the prestige and influence of their German colleagues if only because their position in Viennese society was naturally not so prominent. The same may be said of the Naval Attachés. The officers appointed to these posts by the Italian Government were certainly thoroughly efficient and usually very distinguished. In the Austrian capital the names of Colonel del Mastro and Commander Canciani stood high in professional circles. Captain Count Sigray di San Marzano, who spoke both German and Hungarian with perfect fluency, was an excellent choice for the post of military attaché on that ground alone.

The Emperor had a particularly high opinion of his successor, Lieutenant-Colonel Count Albricci, and he thoroughly deserved it. The old sovereign was genuinely fond of Albricci and was always glad to meet him and have a long talk with him. With his splendid judgment of men he had immediately realized what an unusually capable and accomplished officer Albricci was. He was particularly struck with his youthful vigour and frank, charming manner. One morning at Schönbrunn the Emperor asked me whether

I knew Albricci well and saw much of him. I said that I did. The Emperor continued:

"He's a really first-class officer! He's learned a lot and possesses the valuable faculty of assimilating his knowledge and making it part of himself. I realize it more and more every time I talk to him. He'll go a long way, I'm sure. We shall hear great things of him some day!"

The Emperor Francis Joseph was extraordinarily reserved and he never spoke so openly and highly of any other foreign officer.

I might mention another minor detail here. The Emperor, on principle, never bestowed the Austrian Imperial Order of the Iron Crown upon Italians, because this Lombard Crown had been taken back to Monza, near Milan, in 1866, and thenceforward was regarded as belonging to Italy, as the words "Corona d' Italia" on the insignia of the Order show. This was why Italians received a higher decoration than other foreigners. They were given the Order of Leopold, which was never as a rule granted to foreigners, or correspondingly high classes of the Order of Francis Joseph.

It was the Emperor's intention and desire to help Italy to the greatest possible development along peaceful paths. His great desire was to be able to regard Italy as an effective and loyal member of the Triple Alliance. It is strange that these wishes of the Emperor should have been neither understood nor respected, not only in Germany but also by the Austrian Foreign Ministers, Counts Goluchowski and Aehrenthal. It was during a visit to the German capital in the autumn of 1900, where I had been sent by the Operations Bureau of the Austro-Hungarian General Staff on business connected with the Triple Alliance, that I first realized that in Berlin Italy was regarded as an ally who could not be trusted and on whose support it was impossible to rely when the time came. Not a little amazed at this view I could

not help wondering what were the reasons for maintaining an alliance with a state which was regarded as a secret, and so all the more dangerous enemy. When I asked the Chief of the Operations Department of the Great General Staff, Lieutenant-Colonel Deimling, he said that Italy had been dragged into the alliance to prevent her from stabbing the Central Powers in the back as soon as war was declared, and so placing them at once in a perilous situation.

" In any case, Italy is only a drone in the alliance," concluded Deimling ; " no reasonable person supposes she will really help us when the moment arrives."

The attitude of Goluchowski and Aehrenthal proved that they shared that view. They continually pursued a policy of pinpricks, prompted presumably by a feeling of German and Austrian superiority and therefore deplorable from every point of view. The Emperor refused to identify himself with this policy ; indeed it was quite contrary to his desires, and if he ultimately allowed it to continue unchecked, this again was due to his self-effacement and devotion to duty which prevented him from interfering with the responsible authorities—in this case the Foreign Ministers—by using his influence against them. The following incident is a striking proof :

When Italy declared war on Turkey in 1911 to secure Tripoli for herself Francis Joseph thought that every effort should be made to induce the Porte to hand over Tripoli to Italy in order to bring the quarrel to an early end. Aehrenthal thought differently. He was in favour of encouraging Turkey to stand firm, whatever happened, and to offer the strongest possible resistance. Aehrenthal knew he had the support of Berlin and won the day against the express personal wish of the Emperor.

As a matter of fact, the German Ambassador in Constantinople, Field-Marshal Baron von Bieberstein, zealously urged the Porte to continue the war in Tripoli as stubbornly

as possible. He supplied them with great quantities of military material from Germany and did all he could to support Enver Pasha who was organizing the Turkish resistance in Lybia.

The Emperor consented to this policy with a heavy heart, for it was entirely contrary to his instinct and chivalrous sentiments. One morning he said openly at Schönbrunn :

" What the Germans are doing in Constantinople is as wrong as it is unwise. I have only to ask : Are we Italy's allies or not ? I think we are. In that case it is a mere matter of decency for us to give Italy what help we can, at any rate in the diplomatic field."

Count Paar also supported the opposition—at that time the Emperor was almost completely alone in his views—and tried argument, urging that Count Aehrenthal was of the contrary opinion. The Emperor replied :

" I know that, and Aehrenthal perhaps knows best. But possibly it has not occurred to him that if the present course of events continues Italy may find herself compelled to extend the theatre of war, so far confined to Tripoli fortunately, to other Ottoman territory. That might give rise to serious complications and we ourselves be drawn in. That must be avoided at all costs."

What the Emperor had foreseen actually occurred, but he still wished to allow Italy a free hand against the Turks. He entirely disapproved of Aehrenthal's intervention in favour of the Porte even when the fighting extended to the Adriatic. Once more Aehrenthal, inspired and supported by Berlin, got his own way, though his triumph was ultimately disastrous, as the Lybian war was followed by the Balkan wars which in their turn led to the world war !

This resulted in that estrangement between the Emperor Francis Joseph, who had foreseen all the developments with rare perspicacity, and Count Aehrenthal which would have led to the latter's removal from office if he had not died first.

This fundamental difference of view between the Emperor and his foreign ministers on the subject of Italy is all the more noteworthy as it was exactly the same with regard to Russia. As, however, Austria-Hungary's foreign policy was summed up in her relations with these two states, it follows that during the critical time from 1908 onwards, that policy ran directly counter to the sovereign's wishes. The Foreign Ministers acted on their own views and it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that these were very strongly influenced from Berlin and not less from the Belvedere where the Archduke Francis Ferdinand also lent an attentive ear to the Berlin Foreign Office and was able to intervene decisively. What would have been the course of world events if Austria-Hungary's foreign policy after 1908 had been controlled by the cautious desires of the Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary, and not in accordance with the views of ministers who thought themselves infallible but were really under foreign influence ?

Francis Joseph had always felt deep sympathy for the Russian Empire. This was the outcome of his conservative instincts. But he did not approve, and still less wished to imitate, everything that went on in Petrograd. Nothing would have pleased him more than the complete renewal of the old friendship with Russia. He often used the significant expression : " Three Emperors' Alliance," and uttered it in a tone of longing.

But the foreign policy of both Austria and Russia made such hopes unrealizable. Their fulfilment was already beyond the bounds of possibility ; Russia was obviously exploring other paths.

Nevertheless Francis Joseph was always very pleased when he could discover any possible points of contact with the Czar Nicholas II. It re-awakened his hopes that possibly even yet the day might come when his empire and Russia would once more work together.

When, therefore, in October, 1903, there came an opportunity of entertaining the Czar at Schönbrunn and afterwards at Mürzsteg, the Emperor looked forward to it with a joy such as he had hardly ever shown on any similar occasion. Francis Joseph's inexhaustible amiability and tactful consideration did not fail to make an impression on the Russian Czar. His shy, taciturn nature thawed visibly. Unfortunately these efforts brought no real political results.

At the Russian Embassy in Vienna the blame for this failure was imputed on the one hand to the oppressed condition of the Slavs in Austria-Hungary and on the other to German influence. Of the rival tendencies in the Balkans Russia's dependence on France and the latter's thirst for revenge the Russian officials did not care to speak; it would have sounded too much like a confession of "mea culpa."

Before the annexation crisis of 1908 Francis Joseph visited the Russian Embassy from time to time, especially while Count Kapdist, who was particularly esteemed by the Emperor and very popular in Vienna, was ambassador. After that year it was only on the 19th December—the Czar's birthday—that the Emperor, wearing the splendid uniform of a Russian Field-Marshal, went to convey his congratulations personally to the Russian Ambassador, after having despatched a telegram to the Czar direct at an early hour. In the evening a grand court banquet was given in the Hofburg or at Schönbrunn in honour of the Czar, during which Francis Joseph raised his glass of champagne with the words: "*Je bois à la santé de mon cher frère et ami, l'Empereur Nicolas de toutes les Russies!*"

The Russian military and naval attachés in Vienna could not play so great a part as their German colleagues if only because the relations between the Court and the Russian Embassy were gradually cooling. The Emperor Francis Joseph was nothing if not "correct" and therefore correspondingly sensitive, and he was deeply hurt that while the Austro-

Hungarian military attaché in St. Petersburg was always one of his aides-de-camp (in accordance with that custom, dating from the Holy Alliance, to which I have referred) this mark of respect for the Czar was not reciprocated by the latter.

The Russian "Military Plenipotentiary" in Vienna—that was his official title—was only a lieutenant-colonel or colonel of the Russian General Staff. That only was sufficient to prejudice his position in the eyes of the Emperor to a certain extent.

While I was in the Aides-de-Camp's Department I was on terms of the closest friendship with Colonel Martschenko, one of the Russian military attachés and a really splendid man. He made it the object of his life to do all he could to renew the ancient alliance between Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany. His ambassador, Prince Urussoff, had also been won over to that cause and Martschenko was sure of the co-operation of the German military attaché, Count Kageneck. In these admirable endeavours I was only too glad to give what help I could to Martschenko, not merely because of my personal liking for him, but because he was in fact inspired by the best intentions and I regarded him as a particularly efficient and conscientious comrade. Unfortunately his well-meant efforts had no concrete results, as Count Aehrenthal was Minister for Foreign Affairs at that time, and as a result of his long experience as ambassador in St. Petersburg he rejected the idea of a "Three Emperors' Alliance" as utopian and refused to discuss the matter further, as was his wont. The discouraged and disconsolate Martschenko often asked me: "Who is the real ruler of Austria, the Emperor Francis Joseph or Aehrenthal? And if Aehrenthal is omnipotent is he necessarily omniscient?"

The Emperor Francis Joseph took a great interest in the Russian army, with which he had many ties, as with the German army. He was a Russian Field-Marshal as well as

Commander of the Keksholm Life Guards and the Bielgorod 12th Uhlan Regiment. Until 1908 the active commanders of these regiments—the Keksholm regiment, as was usual in Russian Guard regiments, was always commanded by a major-general—used to present themselves personally to the Emperor. After 1909, in view of the strained situation, this excellent custom was allowed to drop, much to the Emperor's disappointment. As in the case of the Emperor's German regiments, there were many other opportunities for the Russian military representatives to call upon the Emperor and he always received them with marked favour. The Keksholm Guards, whose chief he had been since 1849, had the highest regard for the Emperor, a fact which he warmly appreciated. In January, 1899, the fiftieth anniversary of his appointment to the regiment, he had a special medal struck for the Keksholm Guards, representing himself on the obverse side in the uniform of the regiment and bearing on the reverse a Russian inscription referring to the Jubilee. This medal was presented in silver to all officers and in bronze to all non-commissioned officers of the regiment.

Francis Joseph frequently wore Russian uniform.

"It makes me look younger than the Austro-Hungarian," he used to say, smiling. What I have already said with regard to his German uniforms also applies to the Russian. He was equally meticulous in his respect for the dress regulations. When, in October, 1901, he appeared at the Ostbahnhof at Budapest in the uniform of a Russian Field-Marshal to receive the Grand Duke Michael, the Russian military plenipotentiary, Colonel von Roop, and his staff were already there. When Francis Joseph appeared, Roop looked hard at him and afterwards turned to me in astonishment with the question: "Who is this Russian general?"

When I replied, considerably taken back: "Why, that's my Emperor!" Roop exclaimed:

"I'd never have believed the Emperor would be so correctly dressed. I didn't recognize him!"

When the Emperor stepped up to the Russian officers and quickly removed his white glove to follow the Russian custom of shaking hands ungloved, they were speechless with admiration.

"The Emperor even remembered that!" said Colonel von Roop afterwards; "I should never have thought such a perfect imitation of our customs possible in a non-Russian."

Roop could not refrain from repeating this to the Emperor himself, much to the latter's delight. He then inquired about a large silver medal which the Emperor was wearing among his Russian Orders immediately next to the Order of St. George. He apologized for his curiosity and remarked that although he was an authority on Russian decorations he had never seen this medal before in his life. The Emperor was delighted and replied:

"That I can well believe: it is the Russian medal to commemorate the campaign in Hungary in 1849."

It is well known that Francis Joseph always wore the Order of St. George, 3rd class, which had been presented to him by the Czar Nicholas I. after the capture of Raab in 1849, even when he was walking about at Ischl or Gödöllö in undress uniform or working at his desk. He only removed it in August, 1914, on the day war was declared with Russia, with feelings of deep regret.

It is interesting to remember that in 1914 Nicholas II. also sent Francis Joseph the medal struck by him on the occasion of the Romanoff anniversary celebrations. It reached Ischl in the middle of July, 1914, only a few days before the outbreak of the war.

During the long and prosperous reign of Queen Victoria there was hardly any direct points of contact between her court and that of Vienna. Francis Joseph only once met Queen Victoria, for a few minutes at Innsbruck station;

apart from this the relations between these two were confined to formal and official civilities.

This was changed when in January, 1901, Queen Victoria's eldest son, Edward VII., ascended the British throne. As Prince of Wales he had often paid long visits to Austria and Hungary, during which he had been on very friendly terms with the Crown Prince Rudolph.

When the new King paid his first visit to the Emperor Francis Joseph at the beginning of September, 1903, he was received with open arms as an old and valued friend. There were brilliant festivities at the Vienna Hofburg for it was only fitting that the man who was then perhaps the most powerful sovereign in the world should be honoured as was his due. Moreover, King Edward had acquired a reputation for his outstanding gifts and rare political acumen and that again also contributed to make this first visit an event of far-reaching significance.

In a certain sense that was to be true. King Edward made himself at home in Vienna and his natural kindness which was set off by his perfect command of the German language, was such that Francis Joseph at once surrendered to the charm of the British King. At dinner on the very day of his arrival in Vienna the King solemnly announced the Emperor's appointment as a British Field-Marshal. That the Emperor, who for ten years had been Honorary Colonel of the British First King's Dragoon Guards, prized this honour very highly was shown by the fact that on the following morning the Emperor telegraphed his greetings to all his brother Field-Marshals in the British army individually. In the case of such an exceptionally reserved man as the Emperor Francis Joseph the action was most eloquent.

It was immediately rumoured in the circles of the initiated that King Edward's extraordinary friendliness was bound up with his hopes of loosening the alliance with the German Empire. King Edward is, in fact, believed to have tested the

ground during this first visit and to have found it impracticable because the Emperor was firmly loyal to the alliance with Germany and would not discuss the matter further.

King Edward, however, did not leave it at that. The feelers he had begun to put on towards Vienna had to be extended further. He was in touch with the old Emperor at last and the new relations could not be given up so soon. The King therefore, in April, 1904, sent his son and heir George, Prince of Wales—the present King George V.—with his wife Mary, *née* Princess of Teck, to Vienna to visit the Emperor. The Prince and Princess spent several days at the Hofburg and were overwhelmed with every possible attention.

The Emperor, on his side, also kept up the friendship. He appointed King Edward, who for many years had been Colonel of the 12th Hussars, to the rank of Austro-Hungarian Field-Marshal. His visit of September, 1903, was returned in the spring of 1904 by the visit of the heir, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, to Buckingham Palace and in the same year the Archduke Frederick was sent to England to take the King the Austro-Hungarian Field-Marshal's uniform which had been made for him in Vienna.

In this way there was established between the Austrian and English Courts a relationship which was quite unknown in the old days and which grew ever closer.

This was supplemented most skilfully by the tactful King Edward by frequent correspondence and personal reference to the Emperor. To a man of the British sovereign's high intelligence it was easy to find excuses for referring to the Emperor at quite short intervals without giving the impression of having political or similar objects.

In the spring of 1904, for instance, through the military attaché of the British Embassy in Vienna he inquired direct of the old Emperor what were his views about arming cavalry with lances. King Edward made it perfectly clear that he

wanted to have the Emperor's private opinion only, not the views of leading military circles in Vienna.

Francis Joseph was extremely flattered by this direct appeal to the judgment he had acquired through his long experience, and all the more so because the King frankly admitted that the reason for his inquiry was the fact that he did not care to venture upon a solution of so difficult a problem himself if only because the cavalry of two of the greatest military powers—Germany and Austria—had conflicting views on this point.

The Germans armed their cavalry with lances while the Austrians did not. That fact alone had given the King much to think about and it seemed to him that the only way out of his dilemma was to ask the weighty advice of his true friend, the Emperor of Austria.

Francis Joseph answered in a long, personal letter which it had obviously given him great pleasure to write. With his usual patience and sense of reality he began with a recital of the pros and cons in the matter of arming cavalry with lances. He pointed out that in action, particularly with considerable, self-contained formations, cavalry armed with lances would have a very great advantage over cavalry not so armed. At the same time he made it clear that in view of the nature of modern war it was unlikely that cavalry would be employed as a fighting arm on any large scale. Other points must also be carefully considered—the great difficulty of training men with the lance in view of their short period of service in modern conscript armies; the difficulties of movement over broken or wooded ground, and the relatively little need for the lance when the principal function of cavalry in modern war, *i.e.*, reconnaissance and intelligence work—was being performed.

Summing up, the Emperor concluded that he could recommend no compromise such as arming part of the cavalry only with lances as it would only be too probable that just

at the time when lance regiments were required regiments without lances would be available, and vice versa. If it was not a question of cutting the gordian knot at once and deciding straight off whether to arm the cavalry with lances or not, there was a middle way which might do for the time being. In those States in which individual regiments were already armed with lances it would be advisable not to follow Austria's example, but to leave them with the lances and confine that arm to those particular units. Thus, if future developments solved the problem definitely, the way would have been prepared for the introduction of the lance generally, while the manufacture of the weapons themselves would present no special difficulties.

These clear and quite unpretentious remarks seemed to have completely satisfied King Edward. He thanked the Emperor in particularly warm terms and continued to refer direct to him on all kinds of matters from time to time. Francis Joseph was only too pleased to oblige him, and thus the interchange of ideas became a pleasant custom.

In August, 1904, when King Edward came to Marienbad for the cure—a visit he repeated in the following years—the Emperor Francis Joseph returned his visit in person. On this occasion the plans of the English King were unfolded with greater frankness and the old Emperor returned from Marienbad very depressed, for he was now in a fatal dilemma.

The Russo-Japanese war was then raging in East Asia and taking a turn unfavourable to Russia. England was at that time the ally of Japan and had not yet recognized the Karageo giewitsch dynasty which had established itself on the Serbian throne in such tragic circumstances in the previous year. Recognition was refused of set purpose, as King Edward was keeping Serbia up his sleeve as a possible reward for Austria in return for dropping the alliance with Germany. The British King also pointed out in Marienbad that Austria-

Hungary had now an excellent opportunity of settling Balkan questions in her own favour without having to consider Russia, which was fully occupied in East Asia and therefore defenceless in Europe. Such action would also have brought many advantages to Germany, as for example unlimited command of the south coast of the Baltic. But the main point of King Edward's scheme was that Germany should be kept busy by a conflict with Russia, which would distract her from pursuing her commercial ambitions over the whole world. That was always the English King's primary object.

But Francis Joseph remained true to his loyal views on the German alliance, and neither Vienna nor Berlin would hear of action against Russia. King Edward's plans therefore came no nearer to realization.

He was not discouraged in the least.

On one of his annual visits to Marienbad, in August, 1905, he broke his journey to visit Francis Joseph in his summer residence at Ischl. This was supposed to be a short private visit but it was obviously intended to give the King, who conducted his own foreign policy, an opportunity for an exhaustive conversation with the Emperor. Once more Francis Joseph was placed in an awkward situation and it cost him a tremendous effort to resist the enticements of a man so highly gifted and well versed in diplomacy as the British King. Only at the risk of discourtesy towards his guest did the Emperor finally bring himself to close his ears to the express appeal of King Edward.

This was particularly true of the remarkable drive which the two sovereigns took together in the afternoon of the second day of the King's stay at Ischl. They were quite alone, no members of the suite being present. The drive was through Lauffen and Grisern to Halstatt. As we afterwards heard, King Edward took full advantage of this favourable moment for a confidential conversation to draw a general

picture of the European political situation and outline future plans.

The old Emperor could hardly hold his own against the real talent and moving eloquence of the gifted British monarch. It must therefore have been no easy task for him to refrain from committing himself to some far-reaching programme even by a single word—a word which Francis Joseph, with his strong sense of justice and perfect chivalry, would have regarded as binding.

The Emperor never committed himself without having previously heard the competent ministers. On this occasion they were not available. Perhaps King Edward actually intended that they should take no part at this stage. As everyone at the Austrian Court knew, he had no high opinion of the statesmen of the Danube Monarchy. He wished to speak with the Emperor *cœur à cœur*. When he and the Emperor were to some extent at one, then was the time for the Foreign Ministers and the diplomats to appear on the scene.

This line of reasoning of King Edward VII. was only natural, inasmuch as the foreign policy pursued by Vienna was simply dictated by Germany and the King knew that well enough. He was now intent on a fresh orientation of Austrian policy. He foresaw that his task was no easy one, and therefore offered the Danube Monarchy compensation in a form that was certainly very enticing. Its very attractiveness made it incumbent on the old Emperor to proceed with the greatest caution and reserve, and thus his conversation with the King during this long drive—a conversation full of pitfalls—became nothing less than an ordeal.

On his return it was easy to see from the Emperor's face that the inward conflict to which King Edward's more than plausible arguments had given rise had been a terrible strain upon him. He was quite broken and seemed utterly worn

out. Even at dinner he had hardly a word to say, and he had to make an extreme effort not to collapse in his chair.

Thereupon King Edward, who was always considerate and a man of fine feeling, let the matter rest for the moment with this preliminary *exposé*. He would like to have had further opportunities of direct, personal discussion with the Emperor in which to unfold the outlines of a future alliance between England and the Danube Monarchy. For that reason he had requested that during his stay at Ischl there should be no formal ceremonies. He had even asked the Emperor not to put on English uniform, which he was not accustomed to and found uncomfortable, but to wear the dress he ordinarily wore at his summer residence. With a view to facilitating the Emperor's acquiescence in his request (for Francis Joseph was well known as a model of correctness) King Edward himself wore the uniform of a colonel of the 12th Austro-Hungarian Hussars and not the Field-Marshal's uniform which the Emperor had sent him in the previous year.

In the following year, 1906, King Edward returned to Marienbad but did not visit Ischl. The fact gave an impression that he had taken the Emperor Francis Joseph's refusal of 1905 as final and was not going to renew his advances. Or was this wily diplomat only giving the Emperor time for reflection in the hopes of reaching his goal all the sooner ?

Then there came to the Emperor's summer residence another guest who may possibly have been the emissary of the King of England : Eugénie, ex-Empress of France. With what particular mission, if any, she may have been entrusted by King Edward I have never ascertained for certain, but in any case it was a clever choice for the Emperor would find it more difficult to resist this highly gifted lady who was associated in his mind with brilliant memories of days of yore.

The visit of the Empress Eugénie passed off very successfully, and the Emperor excelled himself in chivalrous

attentions. The old Empress, wonderfully active in body and mind, fascinated not only the Emperor and his family but all who came in contact with her, with her brilliant conversation.

The Emperor showed Eugénie all the honours due to the widow of an Emperor, true to his fundamental principle that a sovereign always remained a sovereign, whether on his throne or not.

He met her personally at Ischl station wearing the star of the Imperial Order of the Legion of Honour,* a decoration from which he was not separated throughout her visit.

The aged Empress was deeply touched when, looking through the window of her compartment of the royal train which had brought her from the frontier, she saw the Emperor on the platform. With tears in her eyes she turned to her gentleman-in-waiting, Franceschini-Pietri, and cried : " Why, the Emperor himself has come to meet me ! " and when she was nearer she added excitedly : " He's wearing the Legion of Honour. Indeed he is ! How kind of him. It's like a dream, a lovely dream ! J'en suis plus que touchée ; je me sens enveloppée dans un rêve, et dans un des plus charmants ! "

Whenever the Empress Eugénie dined at the Imperial villa the Emperor called for her personally at the Hotel Elizabeth where she was staying and always took her home. No guest could ever have received more courteous attention than Francis Joseph showed the ex-Empress.

During her stay in Ischl the Emperor was in excellent spirits. He spent a lot of time with the Empress and had many private conversations with her. It is not known whether she managed to further King Edward's plans with the Emperor, but she must have taken away from Ischl an impression that the situation was not altogether hopeless. Otherwise the King himself would not have reappeared there in the following year.

* The Emperor never possessed the Republican Order of the Legion of Honour.

Once more he came on his way to Marienbad with quite a small suite, the visit being expressly unofficial. This time he set energetically to work. The situation was changed, in that Russia was beginning to recover with surprising rapidity from the setback she had suffered in the Far East. Edward VII. was thus all the more anxious to realize his old plan of " encircling " Germany.

These were difficult days for the Emperor who had to wrestle alone—as the visit was supposed to be private—with the convincing rhetoric of the English King, who was not merely skilled, but a downright genius in diplomatic affairs. The severe struggle he was waging, not only with the King, but still more with himself, was apparent in his face, for it was a question of nothing less than a decision between the right and wrong roads for Austria's future. The Emperor finally chose the one along which loyalty to the alliance beckoned him. He believed he had no other course.

Although King Edward VII. prolonged his visit, which was originally intended to last two days, for a further two days, he did not succeed in making the Emperor change his tried and trusted policy. He went home with his purpose unaccomplished and left the Emperor oppressed by the overwhelming responsibility which his proposals had placed upon him.

Perhaps, on this occasion, much could have been done to the future advantage of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy if the Archduke Francis Ferdinand had been on the spot. With his elastic intellect, his unmistakable capacity for judging political situations and questions without the assistance of endless documents, the heir might possibly have found a way of substantially meeting the views of the English King, which were not unsound and therefore not to be lightly rejected, and so encouraging his friendly feelings for the Hapsburg Empire. That they were not only valuable,

but even indispensable has been shown by later events in a way which makes further comment unnecessary.

But Francis Ferdinand was not available, and even if he had been we know that unfortunately the Emperor could not see eye to eye with him, especially in affairs of state, which Francis Joseph jealously regarded as his own preserve.

Count Paar, it is true, did not share my opinion but thought that Edward VII. would not have had much success even with Francis Ferdinand, because the latter was under a great personal obligation to the German Emperor. William II. had interceded very warmly with Francis Joseph to induce him to consent to Francis Ferdinand's marriage with the Countess Sophie Chotek and the Austrian Emperor had only given his final assent to the morganatic marriage as a result of this pressure. It was therefore hardly to be expected that Francis Ferdinand would show himself inclined to further the plans of the British Sovereign, especially as Francis Ferdinand and King Edward were by no means on the best of terms.

But the British King had not yet thrown down his hand! In 1908 he again came to Ischl, a visit for which the Emperor's diamond jubilee offered the desired opportunity. This time the King came officially and with a large suite, which included the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Sir Charles Hardinge, to congratulate his friend. To his great relief, Francis Joseph was thus enabled to call in the help of the Austrian Foreign Minister, Aehrenthal.

Edward VII.'s stay of several days in Ischl was filled with many brilliant functions, interspersed with political conversations of far-reaching importance. These certainly led to none of the results for which the King hoped. The fact was plain from the manner of his departure. No effort was made to explain away the almost frigid atmosphere which accompanied it. The King's train had hardly started

before the Emperor hurried away from the station, looking grave and out of temper. At the station, just before the departure Sir Charles Hardinge had not hesitated to remark in English to an officer of the King's suite:

"The old Emperor's a splendid and exceptional man. But I believe he's just missed one of the greatest opportunities of his long life."

The European crisis which followed soon after as a result of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the terribly difficult position in which it placed Austria, threw light on England's new attitude and also showed plainly that it might have paid the Emperor to fall in with King Edward's plan. One crisis now followed another.

When the waves of political excitement which ran so high during the annexation crisis in 1908 had to some extent been stilled, King Edward VII. paid his customary visit to Marienbad in the summer of 1909. Before coming he inquired, in spite of all that had happened, whether he might again visit the Emperor on his way home. This proposal was courteously but very definitely declined. Francis Joseph was tired of the inward struggle to which personal intercourse with the King had always given rise; he preferred to avoid it. Nevertheless, on the 18th August —the Emperor's birthday—King Edward sent his Master of Ceremonies, Mr. Arthur Walsh, to Ischl with a present. During his short stay Mr. Walsh repeatedly assured me how deeply the King regretted not having been able to visit the Emperor in person, especially as there was so much of importance to discuss. That was true enough and I have never quite been able to understand why Francis Joseph should flatly have refused to meet the British King, the powerful ruler on whom the fate of a world depended, at the very time when his path was still beset with difficulties.

In the following year King Edward died. Since May, 1910, the throne of England has been occupied by George V.,

who has never visited Vienna as a sovereign. He reaped the harvest which his father had sown.

King Edward's death was deeply and genuinely felt by the Emperor. I never remember the death of any other sovereign producing so shattering an effect upon him. Perhaps it was because he was in the habit of keeping up a livelier correspondence with King Edward than with any other of his contemporaries. Or, again, it may be that he realized that his attitude to the dead King had not exactly been encouraging and his conscience pricked him.

Whatever the reason King Edward's death moved Francis Joseph deeply, and it was long before he found consolation. He was always talking about the true spirit of friendship in which the King met him and the close relations he wished to establish between them.

At the same time it may be that the Emperor was coming more and more to realize that the death of King Edward meant the loss of one of the few sovereigns who could have been absolutely relied on in the hour of need. Hence the deep sigh which the Emperor was often heard to utter during several critical phases of the world war.

" If only King Edward were alive now ! He would know exactly what to do. With genius like his he'd never have let this terrible war break out. I'm certain of that ! He ought to have lived a little longer to control this awful situation. I realize more and more every day that he is no longer with us ! "

The Emperor Francis Joseph appears never to have understood King Edward VII. Personally, I think it not impossible that in his plan for encircling Germany the English King was endeavouring to avert rather than provoke, a war such as that through which we have all recently passed. The tremendous commercial and industrial development of Germany, which aroused a sense of rivalry in England, and Germany's military preparations were bound before long—as

King Edward foresaw—to produce a terrible crisis, only to be settled by recourse to arms. King Edward thought such a catastrophe could best be prevented by the complete isolation of Germany, not with a view to aggression against her, but of cooling her ardour for war. I have repeatedly had this view of Edward VII.'s policy put to me by Englishmen and I really believe the explanation contains a grain of truth.

That this was also realized in Austria-Hungary was proved to me by a remark of General Baron von Fejérváry, ex-Minister-President of Hungary and Minister of Defence. It was immediately after the funeral service for King Edward VII. held in May, 1910, in the church on the Calvin-tér in Budapest.

The Emperor had had to go to the Hungarian capital on the day after the King's death so that the memorial service had to be held in that city.

The court and Hungarian society were fully represented. The Reverend Crabtree, the celebrated Anglican vicar, delivered a sermon and in eloquent terms praised King Edward as a lover of peace who had made it the object of his life to use the methods of diplomacy to save Europe from the chances of war which lurked in the troubles and complications through which it was passing. In ringing tones the English clergyman honoured the dead King's memory as that of a " peacemaker " on the throne.

As I was leaving the church I met Baron Fejérváry at the door, and he remarked to me candidly in a tone of complete conviction :

" The English clergyman has taken the words out of my mouth. I—and everyone else who has really considered the question—have never doubted that Edward VII.'s whole purpose in pursuing his ' encirclement ' policy was to preserve the peace of Europe. The King saw that it was permanently endangered by the antagonism between France

and Germany on the one hand and Russia's aspirations in the Balkans on the other hand. Hence the British alliance with Japan and Edward VII.'s efforts to keep Germany's military threats within bounds by uniting the rest of Europe against her. It is probable that the future alone will show how far King Edward was right. It is certainly a matter for regret that he is no longer here to preserve that balance which—in his own way, perhaps—he strove so hard to establish."

In Austrian political circles, too, this view was not lost sight of. During the period of crisis, 1908-9, both Count Albert Apponyi and Count Julius Andrassy, son of the first Foreign Minister of the Dual Monarchy, strongly urged a *rapprochement* between Austria-Hungary and England. Further, in the late autumn of 1909 I discussed the question with Professor Lammasch who roundly declared that *the only alliance that could secure Austria-Hungary's future, if not her very boundaries, was an alliance with Great Britain.*

To prove his point Lammasch pointed to the extraordinarily complicated European situation, and maintained that a definitely central power in Austria-Hungary's position must succumb to the pressure from all sides unless a strong foreign power—by which he meant England—stretched out a hand to protect her from jealous neighbours. He also argued, to support his theory, that every one of Austria-Hungary's neighbours cherished natural and comprehensible aspirations to some part of her possessions, as all of them —including Germany—had members of their own race within her borders. That was not the case with England, and as an understanding with England would almost certainly lead via the *entente cordiale* to a similar understanding with France, the Hapsburg Monarchy might look forward to an alliance with two powerful states with which it had no frontiers in common. Such an alliance might easily be

followed by an understanding with Russia, or at any rate the renunciation of her Pan-Slav aspirations.

I followed the eminent professor's profound analysis of the situation with the closest attention, but though it fascinated me I was not immediately convinced for the reason that such a policy would involve a complete break with Germany. This Lammasch was not quite prepared to admit. He thought it possible to remain on good terms with Germany, even in the circumstances he had sketched out and that without "surrendering our policy entirely into Germany's hands and so heading straight for disaster."

I repeated Dr. Lammasch's striking views to the Archduke Francis Ferdinand in the spring of 1910. He was not surprised as he had already heard them from another quarter. He did not attach any particular importance to them, dismissing them as "Armchair diplomacy."

"Do you know what the consequences of such an experiment would have been?' replied the heir. "Germany would have at once allied herself with Russia, and we should have been in a dilemma from which there would be no escape. We should have had to wait a long time for help from England or France. The British and French would have kept out of it, and cynically watched us go under. Such behaviour would have been natural, for their immediate interests would not have been involved, and after all charity begins at home. I have not the least doubt that Germany will find a way to Russia if she wants to. Remember Bismarck's famous 'Reinsurance Treaty.' No; this time I agree with Aehrenthal. I don't as a rule. You have probably heard that I considered him as short-sighted mentally as physically, but a blind hen often finds a grain of corn. I certainly won't deny that it might perhaps have been as well not to close all the gates to an understanding with King Edward and burn all our boats as the Emperor did last year."

The Emperor, however, would have no shilly-shallying.

He held steadfastly and straightforwardly to the German alliance and would discuss the matter no further. His action enhanced his reputation in Berlin, for it was a clear, frank beginning. Perhaps the Emperor overlooked the fact that the situation ought to be regarded as a whole, and that the Austrian Empire had interests of her own at stake. A move in the direction indicated by Edward VII. did not necessarily mean an immediate break with Germany, and it would have improved Austria's future prospects. It was not only that the Emperor personally shrank from the enormous responsibility of initiating a fundamental change of policy. His foreign ministers also were not to be moved from their routine loyalty to the Triple Alliance, which was synonymous with the German alliance, the Alpha and Omega of Austria's blind foreign policy in the pre-war period. Count Aehrenthal, who was at the head of the Foreign Office during the greater part of this period, did not dare to act on the Empress Eugénie's excellent motto: "I take my luck where I find it."

In these circumstances it is not difficult to understand why the Emperor's relations with the British ambassadors in Vienna were neither close nor cordial. There was, however, one of them who found his way to the intimacy of the court and Viennese society—Sir Francis Plunkett. A Catholic and a member of a particularly distinguished Anglo-Irish noble family, with the help of his wife and daughter he was able to make for himself a position in Vienna almost comparable to that formerly held by the Emperor's favourite, Sir Augustus Berkeley Paget, and his wife, Lady Paget, the friend of the Empress Elizabeth, and a very popular figure in the capital.

Plunkett's contemporary, Lieutenant-Colonel the Duke of Teck, military attaché to the Embassy, was also a prominent figure in Vienna. He was the brother-in-law of the Prince of Wales, afterwards King George V., a fact which in itself

assured him considerable distinction. His wife was a member of the very distinguished Grosvenor family, Dukes of Westminster, which also contributed not a little to strengthen the social position of the Duke of Teck. In the circle of the Archdukes the Duke of Teck was regarded as an absolute equal, and so they tumbled over one another in their anxiety to give him the most detailed information, both officially and through private channels, about the Austro-Hungarian military and naval services, and particularly their establishments. This proved a very great mistake, for, when the Duke of Teck left Vienna, it was found that he was by no means a friend of the Hapsburgs and their peoples after all. It was even whispered that in his reports to King Edward VII. and the British Government he had described the situation in the Dual Monarchy as very critical, and called it a tottering structure only awaiting the *coup de grâce*. I do not know whether all this was true, but the moral depression which overtook certain circles of Austrian society when the Duke of Teck returned to England did not escape my notice.

The Emperor maintained a fairly close connection with the English Army. Queen Victoria had appointed him Honorary Colonel of the 1st King's Dragoon Guards, to which military honour King Edward VII.—as I have already mentioned—added that of a British Field-Marshal. The King's Dragoon Guards were very fond of the Emperor, and showed their respect and veneration in many ways. These relations continued after the regiment was ordered to Ambala in India, and were for that reason the more highly valued. It should be mentioned that Queen Victoria granted the regiment the right to wear on their collars the Austrian double-eagle, in gold lace for the officers and gilt metal for the men; an unusual mark of respect to the Emperor, by whom it was valued highly. When the King's Dragoon Guards left for India a deputation of officers

presented the Emperor with the flag under which the regiment had taken part in the famous charge at Balaclava on 25th October, 1854. This the Emperor kept in his private apartments at the Hofburg, where he showed it with pride to his guests.

It was obvious that the Emperor Francis Joseph took the greatest pride in his membership of the British Army. He never neglected an opportunity of showing it and thereby drawing closer the ties that united him to that army and the English Royal house. In 1904 he commissioned Professor Benezur, the celebrated Budapest painter, to paint a life-size portrait of him in the uniform of the 1st King's Dragoon Guards. It was a masterpiece and he sent it to King Edward for Buckingham Palace.

Some time later the Emperor had himself painted for the Military Club in London in the uniform of an English field-marshal. He thoroughly enjoyed wearing English uniform —in spite of the discomfort it meant to a man of his advanced years—and the numerous sittings the portrait involved.

When an English squadron anchored off Trieste in July, 1908, the Emperor immediately asked the British admirals —Drury and Prince Louis of Battenberg—to come to Ischl, welcomed them there as his guests, invited them to his family table and overwhelmed them with special attentions.

In June, 1911, when the Emperor was staying at the Villa of Hermes, General Brownlow, the second Honorary Colonel of the King's Dragoon Guards, died. Although the dead officer was not known to him personally, the old sovereign immediately sent telegrams of warm sympathy to King George V., the War Office, the English regiment in India and General Brownlow's relatives. The best proof of the profound impression produced by the Emperor's action is the fact that the very same evening an unusually long telegram of thanks arrived from the War Minister, Haldane, in which reference was made in moving words to the Emperor's touch-

ing expression of sympathy, and a hope was expressed that he would always feel that sense of association with the British Army which did it so much honour.

The Emperor was only too glad to seize every possible chance of giving public expression to the very high opinion he always had of the British nation.

What I have said about King Edward VII. of Great Britain and Ireland may form a natural bridge to his father-in-law, King Christian IX. of Denmark.

The ancient feud between King Christian and the Emperor, dating from 1864, had in my time been long forgotten, and the two old rulers were bound together by ties of close friendship.

King Christian IX. often came to Vienna, and every year to Gmunden, to visit his daughter, the Duchess of Cumberland. Francis Joseph never missed these opportunities of paying a visit to the King and inviting him to dinner at Schönbrunn or Ischl. The two monarchs were always on the most intimate terms.

The Emperor extended his friendship for King Christian IX. to his sons, the prince who became King Frederick VIII. and Prince Valdemar. The former came incognito to Vienna for several weeks almost every year and was well known to the population of the capital. The latter used to spend part of the summer with his children at the castle of the Duke of Cumberland at Gmunden, when he was repeatedly invited to the Emperor's table at Ischl.

The Emperor never knew the present Danish King Charles X. or his brother King Haakon of Norway.

Charles IX.'s second son, King George I. of Greece, inherited his father's affection for the Emperor. Like his brother, King Frederick VIII. of Denmark, he was a frequent guest at Vienna, where every autumn he spent a few weeks incognito. He never failed to call upon the Emperor, and was always invited to the imperial table.

The Emperor was deeply shocked at the tragic end that overtook King George I. of Greece, who had deserved so well of his people. He always kept him in affectionate remembrance, which was often expressed in letters to his son and successor, King Constantine. The Emperor never had any opportunity of getting to know the latter personally.

Among the members of the Swedish Royal family, who were also connected by marriage with the Danish Royal house, King Oscar II. enjoyed a special position in the Emperor's favour. Equality in age for one thing brought the two rulers together. When, in February, 1904, the Swedish King visited the Emperor in Vienna on his way to Abbazia, the latter made every effort to show how greatly this visit delighted him. A few weeks later, at Easter, he returned the King's visit at Abbazia and greeted the Swedish Queen who had followed her husband.

In the following year a slight estrangement arose between the two old monarchs. The reason was an indirect, or rather a moral one.

In the spring of 1905 the Norwegians separated completely from Sweden and appeared in the political arena of Europe as an independent state. King Oscar II. had no idea of holding Norway back from this step. He simply accepted the separation as a fact and did not hesitate to acknowledge Haakon VII., a son of Frederick VIII. of Denmark. Oscar II.'s conduct testifies to a broad-minded clear-sightedness, but Francis Joseph thought differently. It seemed to him a callous surrender of traditional and prescriptive rights, and he stated frankly that the Swedish King had no right to give up Norway without a struggle. What chiefly irritated the Emperor was that Oscar II. had created a precedent which might easily be followed elsewhere. It is not difficult to guess whither the Emperor's train of thought led him. The bogey of Hungary appeared before his eyes, and he was afraid of the pressure that might

be brought to bear by the precedent of Oscar's example if Hungary's efforts to break away—just then reaching a critical stage—should really become strenuous.

When, in November, 1908, Oscar II.'s successor, King Gustavus Adolphus V., with his Queen, *née* Princess Victoria of Baden, paid their first visit after the coronation, bringing to the Emperor Sweden's congratulations on his diamond jubilee, a little incident occurred which showed the Emperor's fastidious regard for the correctness of his foreign uniforms.

For many years Francis Joseph had held the rank of a Swedish general. Some weeks before the arrival of King Gustavus V. it became known that a new regulation had been issued in the Swedish army. The old uniforms, modelled in cut and style on the French, had been replaced suddenly by a new uniform of German model. The Emperor immediately gave orders that a new Swedish uniform should be made for him. This was brought to Vienna from Stockholm by special courier, and the Emperor appeared at the station wearing it to greet the Swedish King and Queen on their arrival in his capital. When the King stepped out of the train and saw the Emperor standing before him in his new uniform he stood for a moment motionless with surprise, for he could scarcely believe his eyes. He said afterwards, in a tone of the greatest astonishment:

"Great Heavens! the new uniform already? And I haven't got one myself yet!"

In my time at the court there was very little intercourse between Francis Joseph and Belgium or Holland, and that only when necessity arose.

In October, 1903, the old King of the Belgians, Leopold II., paid a visit to Vienna and stayed at the Hofburg. The Emperor took no trouble to conceal the fact that he was not friendly to the aged Belgian King. The principal reason was Leopold's unnatural treatment of his daughter Stephanie, widow of the Crown Prince Rudolph, but there was also the

King's private life, which Francis Joseph disapproved of. He had no sympathy for it, nor for the King's other passions.

" King Leopold is just a business man," he used to remark. " He may be all right in his place. But I won't have dealings with business men, especially when they sit on thrones."

Strangely enough, Leopold's nephew and successor, the universally admired King Albert, was not particularly liked by Francis Joseph. When, in October, 1910, the latter visited Vienna, accompanied by his charming wife, daughter of Duke Charles Theodore of Bavaria and therefore the Emperor's niece, Francis Joseph showed no cordiality towards them. He found the King and Queen tremendously intellectual and referred to them in a sarcastic tone, quite unusual to him, as " merely a couple of professors."

" One must be on one's guard not to make blunders when talking to them, and that is fatiguing," he complained to Count Paar. " I should prefer the King to be rather more of a soldier; then I should get on better with him. That there is so little of the soldier about him puts me off."

Queen Wilhelmina of Holland only once stayed at Vienna for a few days, and in the strictest incognito. The Emperor, however, took the opportunity of paying her a visit in the hotel where she was staying and returned very pleased. In September, 1903, when her husband Prince Henry paid an official visit to the Emperor, he invited him to stay at the Hofburg as his guest, met him ceremoniously at the station on his arrival and showed him during his visit all the honours due to a ruling monarch.

The Emperor's relations with the young King of Spain, Alfonso XIII., were based on the latter's family relationship with the Hapsburg house and the Emperor's very great admiration for Maria Christina, the King's mother. When, in August, 1902, the Emperor learned that she had arrived in Baden, after long years of absence from her Austrian home, to visit her brother the Archduke Frederick, he imme-

diately interrupted his visit to Ischl for a few days to visit the Queen Mother.

When, therefore, Alfonso XIII. paid his first visit as King in November, 1905, he received an enthusiastic welcome and the vigorous, and at the same time attractive, personality of the young Spanish King at once impressed the Emperor favourably. This impression was confirmed in October, 1908, when Alfonso XIII. arrived at Budapest with his beautiful and charming wife Queen Victoria Eugenia, to congratulate the Emperor on his diamond jubilee. Brilliant festivities were held in the magnificent palace at Budapest, and the population of the Hungarian capital also did their part to commemorate the visit of the young couple in a fitting manner.

The Spanish King took advantage of this enthusiastic reception to associate the Emperor directly and personally with the Spanish army. On his first visit he appointed him Honorary Colonel of the 38th Léon Infantry Regiment, and on the second, to the rank of Spanish Major-General.

There was little connection between the Emperor and Portugal. Both King Carlos and his second son and heir, Manuel, were not much liked by the Emperor. The way in which Manuel lost his throne disgusted the Emperor greatly. When, in May, 1911, Prince Emanuel of Orleans, the Duke of Vendôme, visited him at Gödöllö and the conversation turned to the subject of King Manuel, who had fled from Portugal to England, the Prince pointed out that the King still nursed hopes of one day returning to Lisbon as a ruler. The Emperor broke in with the following severe opinion :

" Nothing of the sort ! When a King runs away in such despicable fashion at the first disturbance, with no thought for anything but his own safety, there can be no return. The Portuguese would show little sense if they wanted to saddle themselves with him again."

This judgment was the keynote of the Emperor's treatment of King Manuel when, in the following year, he spent a few days in Vienna, in the course of a visit to Germany. He granted him a short audience and did not trouble his head about him any further. When King Manuel asked for a photograph of the Emperor, Francis Joseph gave him one, but with his signature alone; no inscription or friendly dedication. The Emperor often gave away such photographs; he did not feel called upon to do any more for the ex-King of Portugal. When I took this photograph to King Manuel, he looked at it with disappointment and stammered a few words of thanks with his eyes fixed on the ground.

In addition to the Emperor William II., Francis Joseph had another close and loyal friend among his contemporary rulers, I mean King Charles I. of Rumania. It is well known that he was in every respect a splendid king and that mainly to his efforts the nation over which he reigned owes that development which has assured her a place of honour among the states of Europe. The Emperor Francis Joseph and King Charles were knit together by the closest friendship. For many years the Rumanian King came to Gastein for a cure and he regularly visited the Emperor at Ischl. Those were red-letter days for the old monarch; his spirits rose visibly when he had King Charles with him. This idyllic friendship between the two rulers resulted in the best of relations between Austria-Hungary and Rumania, and so long as King Charles lived the people of Vienna regarded Rumania as a trusty and valuable ally, although there was no official alliance between the two countries.

King Charles' wife, Queen Elizabeth, known by her *nom-de-plume* "Carmen Sylva" as an excellent German poetess, was also a zealous champion of the political *rapprochement* between her country and Austria-Hungary. This clever woman rightly saw in the true friendship that associated King Charles and Francis Joseph the surest guarantee

of her success. There is striking memorial of this friendship in the wonderful summer residence of the Rumanian King and Queen, the famous Castle Pelesch at Sinaia, at the southern edge of the richly-wooded Carpathians. During Francis Joseph's visit to this castle in 1897 the Queen asked him to hold King Charles' hand, and then had the clasped hands of the two monarchs modelled from nature and carved in marble by the Budapest sculptor Strobl. This original work of art was to be an emblem of the close bond which joined Austria-Hungary and Rumania.

Unfortunately the friendship did not survive King Charles, for his nephew and heir, Ferdinand of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, went other ways which led him, during the war and even in the old Emperor's lifetime, into the camp of Austria's enemies.

The death of King Charles, therefore, was in a double sense a very heavy loss for the Emperor. The political consequences brought about by the death of the first Rumanian King, a firm friend in every way of the Central Powers, soon gave rise to a rumour in Vienna that he had been forcibly got out of the way at the instigation of the Entente. The Emperor placed no faith in this rumour from the first. About six months after King Charles' death, however, Duchess Paul of Mecklenburg came to Vienna after a visit to Rumania. When I met her at the Hofburg she told me with genuine conviction that King Charles had been poisoned. She said that she had heard this from Queen Elizabeth herself, and there seemed not the slightest doubt as to the correctness of the statement. On the evening before his death King Charles had ordered a cup of tea to be brought to his bedroom. It was brought by a servant who, as was established later, was not trustworthy, and the tea was poisoned. The Duchess Mecklenburg told the same story to the Emperor, but he was most reluctant to believe it.

Ferdinand and his wife, Queen Marie, daughter of Duke

Alfred of Saxe-Coburg, formerly Duke of Edinburgh, and granddaughter of Queen Victoria of England, were not liked by the Emperor. I noticed this when King Ferdinand, then heir to the throne, was present, at the Emperor's invitation, at the grand manœuvres held in September, 1901, in Slavonia and Southern Hungary. The Emperor did not take much notice of his guest, treating him with cold courtesy. When the Rumanian heir arrived very late for a Mass for the Emperor and his Staff, at the end of the service Francis Joseph dropped the remark :

" I detest unpunctuality, especially in the members of a ruling house."

Again, when Prince Ferdinand came to Vienna in November, 1908, as the representative of his royal father, to bring Rumania's congratulations on the Emperor's Diamond Jubilee, the latter said feelingly : " It is a real pity that King Charles couldn't come himself. That would have been a great pleasure. The King has done me no kindness by sending me his nephew."

It is not easy to say what was the Emperor's real opinion of King Ferdinand of Bulgaria. I believe he had a really high opinion of the latter's outstanding qualities, extraordinary ability and almost unique skill as a ruler, but he apparently wished no one to know. I never understood this curious attitude ; perhaps it was based on something that had happened in the past. On the first occasion on which I saw these two rulers together—at Ischl in August, 1907—I was unable to avoid the impression that Francis Joseph did not treat Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria, as he was then, as one would have expected.

I noticed the same thing in the following year, September, 1908, when Prince Ferdinand, accompanied by Princess Eleonora, paid an official visit to Budapest. I regretted it very much, for I confess openly that I never felt the same admiration for any other sovereign as for Prince Ferdinand

of Bulgaria. He struck me as a King in the best sense of the word. Exceptionally cultured and of outstanding intelligence, distinguished and far-sighted in everything that he undertook, I could not have wished for a more desirable friend for the Emperor Francis Joseph.

The Emperor seemed gradually to come to a better understanding of the Tsar of Bulgaria. This became to some extent obvious during his visits to the Court of Vienna in June, 1912, and in February, 1916. But it was too late, for had Francis Joseph earlier sought the counsel of the Bulgarian king and made a friend of him, I believe that the effect on his policy would have been in many ways beneficial. After the death of Edward VII. of England the Tsar Ferdinand was decidedly the most important sovereign in Europe, and Francis Joseph would have done well to treat him with greater deference than was formally due to a sovereign of a minor power. The Emperor's exaggerated respect for etiquette in this respect is exemplified by his hesitation to bestow upon the Tsar Ferdinand the Order of the Golden Fleece. The King of Bulgaria's claim to this honour was all the greater as his brother, Prince Philip of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, already possessed it. And yet, thanks to the petty and irrelevant objections of the Foreign Minister, Count Aehrenthal, the Emperor hesitated for years before making Tsar Ferdinand a Knight of the Golden Fleece. It was another example of the policy of pin-pricks, unfortunately too common in Vienna which had never been so misguidedly applied as in the case of the Bulgarian Tsar.

I had personal experience of one phase of this unedifying policy. In August, 1910, Count Paar had succeeded in obtaining the Golden Fleece for the King of Bulgaria direct from the Emperor on the occasion of Francis Joseph's eightieth birthday. This time everything seemed definitely settled at last and I, always a sincere admirer of the Tsar

Ferdinand, was very pleased. But when Count Aehrenthal got wind of the decision he immediately threw in all the weight of his position—as he had done in 1907 and 1908—to cancel the bestowal of the Order, already definitely sanctioned. In this, unfortunately, he succeeded.

I was very indignant and at the first opportunity which brought me into contact with Aehrenthal could not refrain from asking him what were his motives for this extraordinary behaviour towards the King of Bulgaria. Aehrenthal said that it was very much to the discredit of Francis Ferdinand to have allowed the Crown Prince Boris to go over from the Roman Catholic to the Greek Church, and that he had also allied himself in his second marriage with Princess Eleonora of Reuss, a Protestant princess; such conduct was not in keeping with membership of a Catholic Order *par excellence* like the Golden Fleece. I had no difficulty in pointing out to Aehrenthal the inconsistency of his arguments because, in 1909, Prince Ferdinand of Rumania, then heir to the throne, had become a Knight of the Golden Fleece. His wife was an Anglican and his children were baptized in the Greek Church. My retort at first nonplussed Aehrenthal; then he got angry and cried excitedly: "You are forgetting that Prince Ferdinand of Rumania enjoys the special favour of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife, which is not the case with the King of Bulgaria." I parried this remark by saying: "All the more honour to the Bulgarian Tsar; he is too proud and too much the *grand seigneur* to court the favour of the Princess of Hohenberg." King Ferdinand of Bulgaria was finally appointed a Knight of the Golden Fleece in 1911. The Emperor, in this case, had hesitated much too long, thanks to the bad advice of short-sighted ministers.

The old Emperor was much more gracious to King Nicholas of Montenegro who, even as a prince, was a frequent and welcome guest at Vienna. In the spring of 1905, when

Prince Nicholas came to Vienna suffering severely from gout, the Emperor personally visited the prince in the room in his hotel to which he was confined. When, in June, 1912, Nicholas of Montenegro came to the Hofburg to present himself to the Emperor as King, the latter honoured him by appointing him to the 90th Infantry Regiment. Francis Joseph found much that he liked in King Nicholas. He recognized him as a man of extraordinarily keen understanding and many exceptional qualities. But he did not altogether trust him. He knew that the King was in close touch with the political enemies of the Monarchy and would not hesitate, when the moment came, to range himself on the side of Austria's enemies. But the frank bearing and manner of King Nicholas delighted him, and he accepted with satisfaction his repeated avowals of respect and friendship, particularly as coming from a man of his own age, a consideration which had great weight with Francis Joseph.

Francis Joseph had complete confidence in the Montenegrin Crown Prince Danilo and his wife Militza, *née* Princess Jutta of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, for he knew that Danilo was really devoted both to him and the Hapsburg Empire.

With the court of Constantinople Francis Joseph had few dealings, at any rate of a personal nature. The Sultan Abdul-Hamid II. and his successor, Mohammed V., never left their palace, and were therefore unknown to him. On the other hand Turkish dignitaries used to visit Vienna or Ischl, as also did large Turkish deputations, such as that which conveyed to the Emperor the Turkish Order of Chanedan-i-Ali-Osman. All these were, of course, received by the Emperor with every honour.

With the Serbian Royal House we come to the dark cloud which always hung over the Hapsburg monarchy, and it is difficult to avoid discussing some unpleasant facts.

So long as King Milan Obrenowitsch sat on the throne of Belgrade, relations between him and the Emperor Francis

Joseph left nothing to be desired. Milan always showed himself the faithful friend of Austria, took up his residence in Vienna after his abdication, and died there. The Emperor honoured the memory of this friendship and in February, 1901, attended his funeral in person.

But with Milan's son, the unlucky King Alexander, began a period of somewhat strained relations with the Hapsburg court. The tension became more marked on his marriage with Draga Maschin, a step of which the proud Emperor deeply disapproved. At one time it looked as though King Alexander would succeed in bridging the gulf between himself and Vienna. This was in February, 1903, when, accompanied by his wife and a large suite, he visited his father's grave at Kruschedol. The Emperor had ordered great preparations to be made as a fitting honour to the royal couple on Slavonian territory. King Alexander was deeply touched and thanked the Emperor in heartfelt words. He said he would take the first opportunity of visiting the Emperor personally to express his gratitude.

He never had a chance. The bloody night of the 13th June, 1903, put an end to the Obrenowitsch dynasty and Peter Karageorgiewitsch reigned in their stead. Owing to the justified suspicion that he was not unconcerned in the murder of his predecessor, the Emperor always felt an aversion to him, especially as he also knew that King Peter had for a long time past been deliberately encouraging pan-Serbian intrigues, even within the Austrian Empire, and was, indeed, the moving spirit of the agitation.

The Emperor would have nothing to do with Serbia so that the relations of the Empire with that country were somewhat peculiar. I often had the impression that the Ballhausplatz did not really know what it wanted.

It indulged in constant petty humiliations of Serbia without venturing to take a strong line, for which, on several occasions, there would have been a good excuse. For years

every attempt at *rapprochement* on the part of Serbia, of which several were made, was rejected; King Peter, in spite of advances on his part, was not received by the Emperor Francis Joseph, and finally the short-sighted Hungarian agrarian policy played its part in turning Serbia into the bitter enemy of Austria. This was obvious to all in the autumn of 1908, when Bosnia and Herzegovina were incorporated in the Monarchy. Belgrade protested most passionately against this measure, though it was a very natural step, in view of the general political situation, and even began to rattle the sabre. This it could afford to do, for behind Serbia—perhaps for the first time openly—stood Russia. The Emperor saw these complications looming ahead and he therefore always favoured a reconciliation with Serbia, especially after 1908 and 1909, when the excitement in Belgrade had begun to wane.

I often discussed this question with the Military Attaché at the Serbian Legation in Vienna, Colonel Leschjanin, who had deservedly enjoyed the close confidence of King Milan. Leschjanin strongly favoured the restoration of neighbourly relations between Serbia and Austria-Hungary. The Serbian Minister Simitsch, who was highly esteemed by the Emperor, also worked for this end. Both were unsparing in their efforts, but unfortunately without success, for their very natural desire that King Peter should be received by the Emperor was not gratified. The latter would ultimately have been somewhat disposed to give way, but the foreign ministers, Aehrenthal and Berchtold, were against it and contrived to prevent it. Hungarian influence was certainly at work, for the ruling circles in Budapest were quite satisfied with the Empire's unhappy relations with Serbia, which opened the door to many possibilities, not the least being the elimination of Serbian competition in the export of cattle and grain.

The Emperor Francis Joseph, unfortunately, heard of

these matters only through the medium of his official advisers, who once more led him along the wrong path, for when the Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913 raised Serbia to the status of an important power it was no longer easy to make advances to the Belgrade government.

The Serbians now began to put forward demands and show their teeth. The situation became daily more strained, and finally the Emperor and his ministers realized that it was too late to make friendly approaches to Serbia. In spite of many conferences, no way was found out of the muddle which Austria's entirely mistaken Balkan policy had brought about. To these rapidly increasing difficulties was added the estrangement of Rumania as the result of Count Berchtold's refusal to recognize the Bucharest Treaty in 1913. This was naturally a heavy blow to the Emperor.

At Christmas, 1913, depressed by all the misfortunes which had occurred, he said gloomily to Count Paar :

"The only man who foresaw everything was the King of Bulgaria. If we had only listened to him in time ! After all, would it have mattered so much if Serbia had obtained an Adriatic port ? I don't think it would ; why shouldn't she have a window on to the world ? I think it might even have been an advantage to Austria to be able to get corn and grain direct from a Serbian port to Trieste. At the same time it would have put an end to Hungarian discontent. That would have more than pleased me."

But it was too late. After the mistakes of the Balkan wars the course of fate could no longer be controlled.

In the old days, when the Empress Elizabeth used to spend months at a time at Cap Martin, and her husband came to visit her there, Francis Joseph was himself visited by Félix Faure, the President of the French Republic. Subsequently the Emperor's relations with France were confined to a few occasional receptions of the representatives of the Republic in Vienna. The French Ambassador, the

Marquis de Reverseaux de Rouvray, was always welcomed by the Emperor, and his successor, Crozier, raised himself to a position of confidence. During the annexation crisis, in 1908–9, the Emperor repeatedly consulted him, especially as he soon realized that Crozier was urging the Austrian point of view with emphasis and conviction on the Paris government. The fact that war was then avoided is due not least to the close co-operation between the Emperor and Crozier who succeeded in carrying his point in Paris.

The Emperor was by no means in sympathy with France, but he never let his dislike and disapproval appear in the way. The Archduke Francis Ferdinand did, although on the whole their feelings towards France were similar. Both saw in France's hostility in the past the first cause of the decline of the Hapsburg states, and in France's present policy, particularly her open encouragement of Russia's ambitions in the direction of armaments and expansion, the chief danger for the future. That the Emperor summed up the situation very accurately is proved by the following words spoken by him at a dinner in Gödöllö in May, 1911 :

" All our love of peace will be unavailing if France does not stop supplying Russia with money and everything else she wants. France is the bogey that threatens the peace of Europe. For us the situation is the more ominous as such a war might end in our complete ruin."

While I am on this subject of the Emperor's attitude to France I should not omit to record my growing conviction that the old sovereign was too much inclined to regard France of the French Republic and France under the Emperor Napoleon III. as one and the same thing.

No one can be surprised that Francis Joseph regarded Napoleon III. as a monstrous portent, if not a figure of horror. Was it not the French Emperor who had enunciated the theory of nationality from the throne and then pierced the very marrow of the Danube Monarchy with

that poisoned arrow? Was it not he, who, under the influence of Orsini's bombs, in 1859 had begun to proclaim the dogma of the right to existence of every composite national state at the cannon's mouth?

Action of that kind naturally hit Francis Joseph in his most sensitive spot and he could never forget it, particularly as not only the hegemony of the Hapsburg Empire in Central Europe but even his own absolute power in his kingdom had been shaken once and for all on the battlefields of Magenta and Solferino. The Emperor henceforth considered the French ruler as responsible for these overwhelming and disastrous blows.

One can therefore hardly blame Francis Joseph for looking very critically at everything that happened in France and instinctively shrinking from establishing friendly relations with that country, even though on the whole public feeling there was anything but hostile to the Danube Monarchy.

A factor which contributed materially to his sentiments on this subject was the latent hostility between France and Germany. The Emperor considered that his duty as an ally alone made it incumbent upon him to take Germany's side unreservedly and he did so with all the greater pleasure when he remembered the incalculable harm Napoleon III. had done him.

The best proof to me was the intense interest with which the old Emperor in 1909 followed the half-centenary celebrations of the Italian campaign in all the papers. He was extremely pleased that not only was there little inclination in France to make much of the occasion but that even in Italy the public almost ostentatiously avoided mentioning the name of Napoleon III. It was during this time that the Emperor remarked, as he handed me back a memorial number of the *Illustrazione Italiana* which he had been looking through:

"Thank God, everyone sees now that when Napoleon III

The Emperor Charles and his Family.

[*Facing p.* 288

was trying to undermine *our* position he was only undermining his own as well!"

The Emperor, however, did not extend his dislike either to the French ambassadors or the French military attachés in Vienna. In my time the attachés were Lieutenant-Colonels the Marquis de Laguiche, Girodon, Levesque and Hallier, and the Emperor put them on exactly the same level as their German colleagues. Indeed, it might be said that he singled out the outstanding figures among them—Girodon and Hallier—and obviously liked having them with him.

But these personal relations did not prevent him from connecting France with his anxieties for his Empire's future, for he was firmly convinced that she was a permanent threat to the peace of Europe, and therefore represented the Danube Monarchy's greatest danger.

I should like to mention here that many of the Emperor's remarks justified the conclusion that he was firmly convinced that Austria could not survive a war on several fronts without breaking up. Hence his strenuous efforts to avoid war under any circumstances, at whatever sacrifice. It will always remain a puzzle why he changed his course in July, 1914, and suddenly renounced those pacific principles for which he had previously been severely blamed in many quarters.

In many respects the Emperor's relations with Switzerland were closer than those with France. Here again his personal contact was confined to the Swiss ministers in Vienna and occasional Swiss personages who came to see him, but the circumstance that Switzerland had a frontier in common with Austria-Hungary involved more frequent intercourse. The Emperor regarded Switzerland first and foremost as the mother country from which his house had sprung, and liked to refer to the fact. On only one occasion during my period of service with Count Paar did the Emperor come into direct contact with the Swiss near their own

country. I say "near" because the Emperor was sailing round Lake Constance on the 31st August, 1909, and did not leave the ship when, after coming from Lindau, she anchored at Rorschach off the Swiss shore, which had been decorated for the occasion in the gayest manner by the Swiss. A huge crowd of people in festive garb had collected on the shore and welcomed the Emperor with loud cheers. Several bands played the Austrian National Anthem. In short, it was a fine spectacle, wonderfully set off by the lofty mountains rising behind in the brilliant sunshine like a fairy scene. The Emperor was delighted at this spontaneously enthusiastic reception and, deeply moved, thanked Vice-President Comtesse, who came on board and greeted the monarch in eloquent French as the representative of the aged President, Walter Deucher, who was himself too ill to appear.

In Comtesse's suite were several Swiss notabilities, including the Chief of the Confederate General Staff, Colonel von Sprecher-Bernegg. With all these gentlemen the Emperor conversed for some time and was then presented with a large bouquet of white roses by Swiss girls who had also come on board, a compliment at which he was both touched and pleased. When the Emperor's ship weighed anchor after an hour's stay at Rorschach and put out towards Constance, a farewell cheer of thousands of voices thundered from the shore. The Emperor, in the full-dress uniform of an Austrian field-marshal, stood on the bridge at the salute and for a long time gazed back at the Swiss coast. Then he said: "An excellent people; it has really done me good to be among them."

Our review of the Emperor's relations with the states of Europe would be incomplete if we were to omit that spiritual power with regard to which the Emperor held a special position as the proudest and perhaps the first Roman Catholic prince—the Papal See.

Francis Joseph's Foreign Relations

The outstanding qualities and brilliance with which Leo XIII. endowed the Curia were sincerely admired by the Emperor Francis Joseph. So long as Leo XIII. ruled in the Vatican its relations with the court of Vienna were of the closest, especially as Francis Joseph supported those attempts to unite the Roman and Greek Churches to which Leo applied himself so zealously, even during his extreme old age. The Pope had set before himself as his life's work the task of shepherding the eastern communities into the fold of one united, universal church. And there was no doubt that he was the right man to solve this very difficult problem. His great age and death robbed him of the opportunity of seeing tangible results of his endeavours. His successor, Pius X., proved himself quite incapable of continuing the path along which Leo XIII. had already made great progress. His failure made Emperor Francis Joseph often bitterly regret that he had used his influence, the deciding factor, to secure the election of the Patriarch of Venice, Cardinal Sarto, for, in comparison with the really brilliant pontificate of Leo XIII., that of his successor was a conspicuous failure. When, in July, 1903, Leo XIII. closed his eyes in death, the election of his secretary-of-state, the highly gifted Cardinal Rampolla, to the Apostolic See had appeared to be a foregone conclusion.

Rampolla was said to be a friend of France. He knew, however, that it was necessary to be so. In France a religious struggle had begun which promised evils untold, and after the election of Pius X. the misguided policy of the Vatican led to a complete separation of Church and State, a change which was carried out with no regard to susceptibilities and involved the loss of moral and material property worth millions. These dangers had been foreseen by Rampolla who tried to employ his statecraft to prevent it. He failed, however, for when the Conclave came to the last and final vote which would have resulted in Rampolla's election, the

Bishop of Cracow, Cardinal Puźyna, Kniaż von Kozielsko, in the name of the Emperor of Austria and Apostolic King of Hungary, suddenly exercised the veto which was the Emperor's legal right. The result was the election of Cardinal Sarto as Pope Pius X.; a very unfortunate choice for which the Emperor Francis Joseph was universally held responsible. Yet, both personally and as Emperor, he was quite indifferent as to who was chosen. In exercising his veto against Rampolla he was merely obliging Germany. He was only acting on Germany's request, for Rampolla's sympathy with France was regarded askance in Berlin.

Leo XIII. and his disciple Rampolla would certainly have managed to exert a soothing influence on the course of general politics during the stormy times which soon arose; Pius X. was unequal to this task. Not only his political, but also his dogmatic pronouncements revealed him as a man quite incapable of dealing with the new situation. The Brief issued by him against the Protestants put Francis Joseph in a particularly difficult position, especially in Hungary, where the publication of this ill-timed Papal decree, which was deeply hurtful to the Calvinists, had to be forbidden by authority.

These troubles depressed the Emperor considerably and gave him a sense of responsibility which gradually made his relations with the Vatican less cordial. And so it continued to the end of his life. Between the Emperor Francis Joseph and Pius X. close co-operation was henceforward impossible. The result was that the Emperor's relations with the Papal Nuncios at his court, Talliani, Bavona and Scapinelli, became purely formal although, of course, he had fairly frequent dealings with them, if only because the Papal Nuncio at the Austrian court was by traditional usage the doyen of the diplomatic corps.

Yet the Papal Nuncio was regarded in Vienna—even in leading circles—as the only mouthpiece of the Pope. What he said carried considerable weight, therefore, particularly

when the Nuncio was a man of standing who added personal authority to his office and its powers.

In Vienna he had the special advantage of the indirect support of the court ladies and the highest nobility, particularly as the Austrian capital was a more suitable field for his activities than anywhere else owing to the fact that Austria was a state—perhaps the only state—in which the Church of Rome still exercised a more or less unlimited authority. As the Curia, however, rightly appreciated the trend of the times, it took good care that the influence of the Nuncio should be exerted silently and inconspicuously, though all the more effectively.

The Emperor himself would have none of it. He would not tolerate any competing authority and was not in the least afraid of translating his wishes into facts in a manner that allowed of no ambiguity. The Nuncio Agliardi had to yield—somewhat shamefacedly—to Baron Banffy, the Hungarian Minister-President, and Archbishop Granito di Belmonte, to the Foreign Minister, Count Aehrenthal. In such matters the Emperor would stand no nonsense.

It was only after his death that the situation changed to the advantage of the Papal See and its ambitions. The Nuncio now at last stepped into the foreground with the result that at the court of the Emperor Charles and his wife there was no more important figure than the Pope's representative, Count Valfrè di Bonzo.

The views of the Bourbon Empress Zita may also have been responsible for the fact that at this time—the last days of Hapsburg rule—the influence of Romish ecclesiasticism prevailed over all others, and thus threw open the door to clerical aspirations. Such a development would have been impossible in the days of the old Emperor who was surely just as good a catholic.

Here I leave Europe to cast a glance at the other continents, although Francis Joseph's relations with the rulers

of these parts of the world were slight and merely occasional, a fact which is explained by the consideration that Austria-Hungary was the only great power that possessed no colonies.

Of African rulers, those with whom Francis Joseph came into contact were Khedive Abbas II. Hilmi of Egypt and the Negus of Abyssinia. The former several times visited Vienna, where he was welcomed by the Emperor and treated with great deference. The latter, in September, 1911, sent a large deputation to the capital, where it was received very graciously by the Emperor and its members were gratified with every mark of distinction. The Emperor was full of praise for the bearing of this Abyssinian deputation, and was pleased with the opportunity its visit offered to make the acquaintance of members of an ancient African race.

From Asia the Shah of Persia, Mozaffer-Ed-Din, came to Vienna in September, 1900, and June, 1905, staying on both occasions at the Hofburg as the Emperor's guest. It was not easy for Francis Joseph to treat this typical Asiatic potentate with the friendliness and consideration to which he, like any other ruler, was assuredly entitled. It was therefore not altogether without relief that during the Shah's second visit (1905) he left for Budapest to attend the funeral of the old Archduke Joseph.

In April, 1902, the Crown Prince of Siam, Maha-Wadjirawudh, came to Vienna. He also stayed at the Hofburg where festivities were held in his honour. He accompanied the Emperor to the New Year's review on the Schmelzer parade ground. The Emperor was delighted to see how carefully the Prince observed European customs and the keen interest he took in everything he saw. The well-educated young Prince pleased the Emperor greatly. He found him " delightful and most charmingly courteous."

The Emperor's relations with Japan were much closer. His interest appears to have been awakened by this country's swift and portentous military development, to which her

successes in arms against Russia in 1904 and 1905 eloquently testified. Princes of the Japanese Imperial house often came to Vienna and Budapest, as also did Japanese high military officials and deputations. It was always a sincere pleasure to the monarch to converse with his guests. This was not difficult, because the Japanese of the higher social circles, especially military circles, nearly all spoke German, or at any rate French. Francis Joseph was also in frequent touch with the Japanese ambassadors at his court—men of outstanding intellectual gifts—and he never lost an opportunity of expressing the high opinion he held of their nation.

This partiality was quite striking and was the outcome of the Emperor's military views. He was impressed by the victories that Japan's army and navy had won against Russia. During the war in the Far East he followed with the keenest attention the reports on Japan's military achievements, from which he insisted much should, and must be learnt. He therefore liked Japanese military missions and naval officers to come to Austria and confer with Austrian military and naval authorities. He thought that the latter would also benefit from this intercourse and from the experience which had won for Japan such amazing results. Whether these excellent intentions were appreciated as they deserved by the leaders of his armed forces is doubtful. That seems particularly true of the Austro-Hungarian General Staff. Otherwise many things which contributed to the overthrow of the Hapsburg monarchy in the world war would not have happened.

There was another point about the Japanese which impressed the Emperor Francis Joseph—their capacity for harmonizing ancient traditions, faithfully held for thousands of years, with quite modern views and developments.

One of the Emperor's most attractive characteristics was the fact that he recognized pre-eminence in others and did not know what envy was. Whereas the Emperor William II.,

for example, always wanted himself and his Empire to have the front seat everywhere, or to force themselves into it with as little delay as possible, Francis Joseph was free from such jealous feelings. Although throughout his reign he could look back on no decisive victories, he acknowledged the military triumphs of Japan without bitterness and watched with the same keen interest and genuine admiration the vast development of the North American Union. It was much to be regretted that he never mastered the English language, so that he lost the opportunity of direct conversation with the American officials in Vienna, most of whom could not speak any other language. The employment of interpreters handicapped the Emperor, for it deprived him of direct contact with the Americans.

"I will not trouble you gentlemen further. This is merely tiresome for us three. If only I could talk English there is lots more I should like to hear from you." With these stereotyped courtesies the Emperor would soon break off such conversations. Afterwards, however, he would eagerly inquire what the American gentlemen had had to say, for he made a very great point of being thoroughly informed on foreign affairs.

Even in matters of etiquette the Emperor ranked the Presidents of the United States on a level with European monarchs. This was made plain during manœuvres at Hajmáskér in September, 1901, when news of the assassination of President McKinley reached head-quarters at the Monastery at Zircz.

The Emperor immediately sent particularly warm personal telegrams of sympathy to the first Vice-Presidents at Washington and the United States representatives in Vienna, instructed the Austro-Hungarian representatives in Washington to convey his condolences to Congress, and was represented officially at the memorial service in the Anglican church in Vienna.

In May, 1910, when Mr. Roosevelt visited Vienna, he was not only received in special audience by the Emperor but a brilliant court banquet was given in his honour at Schönbrunn. This was all the higher an honour as Roosevelt at that time was no longer President but was visiting the city only in a private capacity. The fact, however, that he had shortly before been the highest dignitary in the United States moved the Emperor to receive him with exceptional honour.

Roosevelt was not unappreciative of such honours for when I talked to him during the afternoon following the audience he was most enthusiastic about the way he had been received. In the course of the conversation I mentioned his hunting expeditions in Africa and the unique successes he had achieved there. With a wave of his hand Mr. Roosevelt remarked with a warmth that was obviously genuine :

" What is all that compared with the impressions I bring away from my reception by your Emperor. I would willingly exchange the memory of my lion hunts for an audience with the Emperor Francis Joseph. There is nothing finer than the noble, century-old traditions which he alone personifies."

Roosevelt was the first visitor to whom the Emperor granted permission to appear at an audience in a lounge suit, and with a coloured tie—a concession to Anglo-American customs which caused no little comment at the time in Vienna.

Diplomatic relations with Mexico had been broken off by the Emperor after the shooting of his brother Ferdinand Maximilian on the orders of President Benito Juarez in 1867. They were not resumed until the year preceding the overthrow of President Porfirio Diaz, when the Emperor honoured the latter with the Grand Cross of the Order of St. Stephen. Whether this was a wise action may be doubted, especially as Porfirio Diaz had a hand in the tragedy of Queretaro. It would better have become the Emperor's

dignity if he had deferred this *rapprochement* with Mexico until Porfirio Diaz had ceased to be the head of the state. In any case the step did not benefit the Austrians and Hungarians living in Mexico, for shortly afterwards the country was rent by continuous internal discord which made any attempt at regular intercourse illusory.

To the Mexican chargés d'affaires as well as those of the South American republics, Brazil, the Argentine, Chili and Peru, the Emperor always extended the privileges which were due to them as members of the diplomatic corps at the court of Vienna. He received them with perfect courtesy on all occasions which brought them into contact with him.

Chili was in closer touch with Austria than the other South American republics by virtue of the fact that this state sent excellent officers to Vienna for the benefit of their military education. I might mention Colonel Barros Merino and, after him, Colonel Davila Baeza, both of whom could boast of the Emperor's special regard. The same applied to the Argentine military and naval attachés in Vienna, of whom Captains Malbrán and Fliess were very popular in Vienna society.

I have thus completed my rapid sketch of the Emperor Francis Joseph's relations with foreign powers during the latter part of his life.

In this department, as in every other, the Emperor's unswerving devotion to duty was apparent. Here again he did not spare himself in the interests of the welfare and safety of his peoples.

Whether his well-meant efforts were successful it must be left to History to decide. Unfortunately we, his contemporaries, lived to witness a complete breakdown of all Austria-Hungary's foreign alliances with the exception of that with Germany, the only one which held even in the hour of direst need, and that because it had the approval of the majority of the citizens of both nations.

Francis Joseph's Foreign Relations

The question naturally rises whether the Emperor Francis Joseph's attitude to foreign nations should not have been based on other principles if the frightful catastrophe of the complete dissolution of his Empire was to be avoided. It must be left unanswered even now. For the moment it is enough merely to refer to the suggestion I have made in an earlier chapter of this book—that the Emperor's actions were always attended by the most obstinate lack of luck. If it had not been so, his universally admitted love of peace, and his personal kindness and anxiety to do everything possible to further good relations with foreign countries, would have succeeded in effecting many changes. Of course this is only on the assumption that his self-sacrificing endeavours had been supplemented by the efforts of those who worked with him. But that condition precedent seems never to have been fulfilled, and the old Emperor was the first to recognize the fact to his bitter regret. He resigned himself to it, as to so many other things, with fatalistic indifference, and only occasionally put his disappointment into words. When he did no one could have the slightest doubt that the Emperor Francis Joseph had a low opinion of his diplomats.

On one occasion the Emperor was pressing for a certain document from the Foreign Office for which he was kept waiting all day. When at last it arrived, and anyone could see that it could have been prepared in a few hours at most, the Emperor shook his head and murmured: "Lucky fellows, these diplomats! No such thing as hurry for them. The ordinary departmental nag is a racehorse compared with the Foreign Office specimen!" But when Count Paar suggested that he should convey a message from the Emperor that the Foreign Office should be a little more expeditious in its work, the sovereign remarked in a tone of resignation: "You can save yourself the trouble! I've often tried that myself and always in vain!"

There were other occasions on which the Emperor revealed

his despair at his helplessness in matters diplomatic. At the beginning of February, 1906, the Archduke Leopold Salvator represented his sovereign at the funeral of King Christian IX. of Denmark in Copenhagen and Roeskilde. When he came back, the Archduke was very angry and used very harsh words of the Austro-Hungarian ambassador in the Danish capital, because he had not merely given him no assistance but showed himself extremely ill-informed about everything. This came to the ears of the Emperor, but all he had to say was this:

"The Archduke mustn't worry. You can tell him that throughout my long reign my diplomatists have never been well informed. They have always asked *me* questions! There's nothing you can do to alter it."

This remark of the old Emperor, who was usually extraordinarily severe and hard in matters in which there had been any failure of duty—especially where soldiers were concerned—utterly astonished me. How could the Emperor have a double standard? The phenomenon is partially explained by the fact that the diplomatic service had more or less become the preserve of the aristocracy, and the Emperor was always peculiarly patient and tolerant towards the nobility. It was also attributable to his peculiar view of the diplomatic service. He simply regarded it as nothing but an ancient institution which modern life had outgrown. He let it continue for the sake of its representative functions, but he had virtually ceased to attach any practical importance to it. The Emperor was a man who preferred working with written documents, and he cannot have liked having so little regard for diplomatic reports, even those of the military attachés. With his never-failing sense of duty he read them industriously and carefully, but as a rule he passed on to the next item with a sceptical shrug of the shoulders.

Considering the actual constitution of his diplomatic service, the Emperor's opinion can hardly be made a reproach

to him. But why did he not exert himself to make any change? Why did he reconcile himself to the view—which ultimately became a part of himself—that "diplomacy is never any good"?

That may be the very reason why it was "no good," even in Austria-Hungary's hour of fate, and failed so completely that the great imperial edifice which Francis Joseph had built up and preserved with such trouble, patient and self-sacrificing effort, suddenly crumbled into ruin.

The well-known historian, Dr. Heinrich Friedjung, told some of his friends in the late summer of 1919 that notwithstanding all the Emperor Francis Joseph's virtues as a rule—and many of them were great virtues—all he had really done was to make the downfall of the Hapsburg Empire inevitable. The course which he had pursued in domestic affairs as well as his foreign policy was bound ultimately to bring about the collapse of the Danube Monarchy.

"It is not a mere coincidence," continued Dr. Friedjung, "but seems to me highly characteristic of Francis Joseph's work that he ushered in the catastrophe which was to overwhelm his Empire with an ultimatum—the ultimatum to Sardinia on April 23, 1859—and crowned it fifty-five years later with another ultimatum—the ultimatum to Serbia on July 23, 1914. That alone points to a perpetual miscalculation of the situation and above all an overestimate of what the Empire could do. No one can relieve the Emperor from responsibility for that mistake!"

This verdict of the celebrated historian, perhaps not inapt at first sight, but certainly too severe, misses its real mark. *It does not apply to the Emperor Francis Joseph.* The weight of this formidable charge falls solely on Austro-Hungarian diplomacy, the inefficiency of which brought the Emperor himself to the discouraging and often despairing conclusion that he could never count on his diplomatists.

CHAPTER X

THE OLD EMPEROR IN THE WORLD WAR

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY gave the signal for the great war in the summer of 1914. That is a fact which cannot be spirited away.

How could it possibly have come about that the peace-loving old Emperor, of all men, should have lighted the torch that set the world in flames? Everyone knew for years that Francis Joseph had made the preservation of peace at any price his holiest duty, and that to fulfil it he had used all the resources at his command, including the full weight of his personal authority. He had given patent proof of his intentions by his actions in 1908-9 and 1912-13, when the waves of political excitement ran high. To him the world unquestionably owes the fact that at those two highly critical moments the great powers did not fly at one another's throats, and it was saved that deluge of blood which Francis Joseph could postpone, but not avert for ever.

It was Francis Joseph, too, who for a full decade had firmly rejected all the insinuations of the Chief of the General Staff, von Conrad-Hötzendorf, who believed that the only guarantee of Austria-Hungary's future existence was an attack on her dangerous or unfriendly neighbours at her own selected moment. That officer had hardly been appointed to his high post in the autumn of 1906 before he began to pester his sovereign with a series of memoranda in which he gave reasons innumerable for the view that the monarchy was not equal to simultaneous wars with Italy,

Serbia, Montenegro and Russia, and must therefore snatch the first favourable moment of dealing with her prospective enemies one by one.

Conrad summed up his proposals in the words "preventive war," by which he meant that he advocated a war "on our own initiative," and begun under favourable auspices. In that way only would it be possible for the monarchy to avoid having a war forced upon her at her enemies' selected moment.

In these views Conrad was in direct opposition to Count Aehrenthal, the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, who adhered unswervingly to that traditional peace policy of the Hapsburg Empire which Conrad was absolutely bent on infecting with a militaristic, or rather imperialistic virus. The latter was no doubt inspired by patriotic motives, though an element of personal ambition made its presence felt.

Be that as it may, in this conflict of wills the Emperor always took Aehrenthal's part, so much so, that he finally got rid of Conrad in the autumn of 1911, when he produced another memorandum to the effect that war must be declared on Italy, which at that moment had her hands full in Tripoli. Aehrenthal would hear nothing of such a policy of "brigandage" and the Emperor supported him.

The Emperor deserves all the more credit for this example of his determination to keep the peace because his heir, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, was hand in glove with Conrad and regarded the latter's dismissal as neither more nor less than a personal insult.

Could not Francis Joseph have proved himself the "Peace Emperor" once more in 1914? Were his powers of resistance to the war-party already worn down, or were there special reasons which even he regarded as unanswerable? Are we bound to assume that in 1914 his unswerving determination to keep the peace was a thing of the past, or that it failed in the face of considerations that seemed imperative?

There is an element of inherent improbability in the latter alternative, if only because Francis Joseph's actions for nearly half a century cry out against it. Those in a position to know have always been positive that the old Emperor did not want the war. The whole court was convinced of the fact.

Count Paar, for instance, told me in the critical days that the Emperor was horrified at the outbreak of the war. When I put the obvious question as to why, if that were so, he had not prevented it, Paar was at a loss to find any enlightening reply, and proceeded to blame Count Berchtold, the Minister for Foreign Affairs. At a later date, however, Paar was anxious to relieve Berchtold of the entire burden of responsibility and transferred it to the shoulders of his colleagues in the Ministry, Counts Forgach and Hoyos, the ambassadors von Musulin and Wiesner, the joint Finance Minister, Baron von Bilinski, and last, but not least, von Conrad Hötzendorf.

As I am anxious to give no grounds for misunderstanding I must insist that in this book nothing is further from my intentions than to discuss the real causes of the war, direct and immediate or indirect and ultimate. I am of course familiar with many of the relevant documents and I have read, at any rate partially, the different White, Red, Yellow, etc., Books published by the various Foreign Offices.

Yet to deal with, or even refer to these seems to me certainly no part of my task, if only because my book, which is sufficiently described by its title, is a volume of " personal reminiscences " only. What Count Paar said in the critical days must therefore be considered from that point of view alone.

Count Paar's words were echoed by nearly everyone in the Emperor's immediate entourage.

The same view was expressed to me on several occasions by Frau Schratt, who based it on direct remarks of the

Emperor himself. She was emphatic that the Kaiser was absolutely opposed to any war and would never have started one, or even dreamed of an ultimatum if Germany, or Herr von Tschirschky,* had not urged that course.

The Emperor had expressly declared that Germany had categorically demanded that the ultimatum to Serbia should be couched in the sharp terms which ultimately brought about the war. According to Frau Schratt, the German scheme, which made compromise impossible, had prominent supporters even in Vienna. At their head was the all powerful Prince Montenuovo, the Court Chamberlain. He and those of like mind with him were ultimately successful in gradually overcoming the Emperor's ingrained love of peace.

On the other side is the fact that Count Berchtold has himself publicly declared that Germany was only informed of the contents of the ominous ultimatum *after* it had been dispatched, the reason being that on the German side the Minister for Foreign Affairs had from the outset been given full freedom of action against Serbia. This declaration simply made Frau Schratt smile and shrug her shoulders. She said she knew better. The Emperor had told her, not once but many times, that he absolutely and utterly disagreed with the ultimatum and only allowed it to be sent to appease Germany. She was immovable on this point.

Yet Frau Schratt had evidently fallen into a great and serious error, especially in so far as her judgment of Prince Montenuovo's attitude was concerned. The fact is that after the funeral of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and the Duchess of Hohenberg, the Grand Chamberlain did not go from Vienna to Ischl, but hastened to Karlsbad, where his only son was lying dangerously ill. He took him back to a sanatorium in Vienna where the Prince had to undergo a critical operation, and his father never left his bedside throughout the anxious period of his convalescence.

* German Ambassador in Vienna.—[Tr.]

Prince Montenuovo only heard of the rejection of the ultimatum by Serbia from the newspapers. His well-known and unfailing sense of duty then made him leave his son, who was still very ill, and go to Ischl himself. He reached Ischl *after* the mobilization decree had been issued, and therefore at a time when the die had been cast once and for all. It is well known that the Emperor *never* carried on a private correspondence with anyone except his nearest relations. He did not write to his Grand Chamberlain, and considering that the latter was therefore entirely out of touch with his sovereign at the critical moment, it is impossible to imagine how the Prince could have managed to overcome the Emperor's pacific sentiments and persuade him to declare war, even if he felt any inclination to intervene in a matter quite outside his province, a course which undoubtedly never occurred to him.

The truth is that Prince Montenuovo—as I know only too well—has always cherished a feeling of the deepest satisfaction that owing to his absence from Ischl he was never in a position even to drop a casual remark which might have revealed his views on the situation.

On this point, therefore, Frau Schratt was unquestionably ill-informed.

I have only given these examples because they, and many others of which I heard and no doubt shall hear, prove how widespread and intense was the belief in the Emperor Francis Joseph's love of peace. Yet it failed at the critical moment! Does it mean that the old sovereign no longer possessed the physical or moral strength to get his own way?

That, too, is incredible, because Francis Joseph's personal prestige was so great in the eyes of his allies, as well as his advisers, that they could hardly have resisted a direct intimation of his wishes in the matter.

Then was there some special reason in 1914 for the

departure from the traditional peace policy? And was that reason primarily the double crime of Sarajevo on June 28?

Anyone who knows how high the Emperor set the interests and dignity of his family and house, and how sensitive he always was to attacks upon him—indirect as much as direct—may perhaps realize that the violent end of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife may have seemed to the Emperor sufficient justification for an appeal to the sword against the country from which led the threads of the monstrous crime.

But in view of what I personally know and heard, this theory is no more adequate than the others. Late in the evening of June 28, 1914, when several accounts of the tragic event, including a special telegram from Marshal Potiorek, the Governor of Bosnia, had reached Ischl, I discussed the matter with Count Paar, concluding with the question:

"Surely the Emperor thinks that to-day's crime may have political consequences?"

"Not at all," replied Count Paar in a decided and convincing tone. "Why on earth should it? He'd certainly have said something to that effect when I gave him Potiorek's telegram. This is just another of those tragic occurrences which have been so frequent in the Emperor's life. I don't think he regards it in any other light."

General Baron von Bolfras, the Chief of the Military Cabinet, also told me that the idea of a possible war had not even occurred to Francis Joseph when he had the first news of the assassination from Sarajevo.

No, the notion that the crime was a *casus belli* came later, and was to a certain extent the product of subsequent influences.

After the funeral ceremonies of the Archduke and Archduchess in Vienna, the Emperor and his small suite returned on July 7th to Ischl, and, to outward seeming, at any rate, life resumed its normal course.

But immediately after our arrival there news began to come in that the authorities were on the track of a great plot, the threads of which had been spun in Serbia after the annexation of Bosnia in 1908 and gradually formed a narrow-meshed net into which the heir and his wife had blindly fallen. On July 7th a cabinet council had been held in Vienna and it was decided that the crime of June 28th must be treated as it deserved—by the methods of diplomacy first—as the monarchy could no longer tolerate further threats. There had been no lack of anger with Serbia at this cabinet council, and it was wholly and solely due to the conciliatory intervention of Count Tisza, the Hungarian Minister-President, who advised caution, that war was not declared on Serbia at once. The guilt of the crime of June 28th was now laid to the exclusive charge of the Belgrade Government.

But I was not entirely convinced by this one-sided view, for it has now been clearly proved that the measures taken to protect the Archduke and his wife during their visit to Sarajevo were neither more nor less than illusory. If those measures had not failed so utterly that their inadequacy mocks description, it is highly probable that the fateful drama would never have taken place. If the right course had been taken the trial of the assassin, who had been caught in the act, should have taken place at once as usual.

The failure to take such action proved a gross error. The really remarkable thing is that at court no one dared say very much about Sarajevo. Personal considerations counted for too much, a fact which seemed to me highly regrettable, especially in such a case.

In this connection I should mention the hardly less striking fact that no changes of personnel were made in the highest posts of Bosnia-Herzegovinian administration. It would have been advisable at any rate to consider certain changes, not merely for obvious reasons of dynastic prestige,

but particularly with an eye to public opinion in the monarchy and subsequently in Europe.

On the Emperor's return from Ischl to Vienna, immediately after the Sarajevo tragedy, I discussed with Prince Montenuovo the necessity for Marshal Potiorek's immediate dismissal from his post, as the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and the Duchess of Hohenberg had been assassinated under his very eyes. In general, Prince Montenuovo shared my view, but he thought it would be advisable to wait for Potiorek himself to ask for permission to resign. As a matter of fact Potiorek never looked like wishing to resign his post. He ought to have been dismissed at once, and with him his Chief of Staff and the departmental heads of the provincial government, as well as the local authorities responsible for the police service in Sarajevo.

With that in mind, I casually spoke to the Chief of the Military Cabinet shortly after, but he abruptly interrupted with the remark that Marshal Potiorek was indispensable at Sarajevo and his services must be retained there at any price.

This conviction was thus one of the reasons why Vienna and Budapest, as if fascinated, could not keep their eyes off Serbia. Yet, in view of our international position, we ought to have started by clearing things up at home. If we had done so we should have been in a position to turn against Serbia on the ground of proof positive and to demand from her effective guarantees against the continuance of the revolutionary activities on her soil.

Three weeks had passed since the Sarajevo crime, when, after the morning report on Monday, July 20, Count Paar handed me a sheet of paper containing notes in his clear handwriting. He asked me to read them through at my leisure, saying they were headings from the draft of an ultimatum which was to be handed to the Belgrade Government at once.

Of course I had known of the intention to send an ulti-

matum, but had not been particularly disconcerted, as I assumed that, as so often before, matters would take the usual course of the more or less platonic exchange of notes. But this time, as I began to read Paar's notes, I knew at once —and so did everyone else who saw the contents of the document—that far more was meant this time. When I had finished, I handed the paper back to Paar and at first I was so surprised—thunderstruck, if you will—that I could not utter a word. A few seconds passed before I said :

" That means war ! "

At this remark Count Paar was simply beside himself. In this diplomatic document he could see only a replica of those which had been exchanged in 1908-9 and 1912-13, perhaps with the single difference that our vigorous language aimed at compelling the Serbs to turn over a new leaf once and for all. He also considered it perfectly proper that our political action was not accompanied by any military measures, as such precautions, besides being superfluous, would only have involved us in unnecessary expenditure.

I was quite unconvinced by what he said, for my mind went back to another ultimatum—that ultimatum of the 23rd April, 1859, with three days for reply, which we had presented to Piedmont. Speaking of it subsequently, Moltke remarked that it had been a colossal error, because a note with so sharp a tone and so short an interval should only be sent when the army is in a condition to take the field at once, in accordance with the principle that policy and strategy should always go hand in hand.

In both cases the idea of mobilization had not even occurred to us ! The ultimatum was neither more nor less than a paper threat without any effective backing. Before the Emperor's consent was obtained he had to be told over and over again that the ultimatum was bound to be effective and involved no danger.

It is true that sixty-four years earlier Austria had, by this

means, obtained a dazzling, though temporary, success over Prussia. Perhaps the authorities believed history would repeat itself. But Olmütz was followed by Königgratz. Was there no ground for fearing a similar experience ?

I put these thoughts into frank words in my talk with Count Paar on that memorable 20th July.

Next morning he asked me whether I was still as pessimistic. He certainly considered the situation serious, but nothing like as critical as I thought it. In any case, Serbia's challenge must be taken up.

I merely asked Count Paar what was the Chief of the General Staff's attitude in the matter.

" As far as I know," replied Paar, " General Conrad has said that our military situation would only get worse in the next few years."

" What do our allies say ? " I asked.

" We'd better leave them out of account for the time being," said Paar. " Germany knows of our intentions and seems to approve them unreservedly. Italy never asked our opinion when she attacked Turkey for the sake of Tripoli."

I did not accept Count Paar's logic and emphatically repeated my doubts whether Serbia would accept the ultimatum. Paar, however, fully shared the view of leading circles in Vienna, that this time, as Belgrade had made assassination a tool of policy, it would find itself without a single ally and, therefore, be in no position to reject the ultimatum.

Paar was no longer quite so cavalier with my objections, and ended up by strongly advocating that before any further steps were taken, Count Berchtold should obtain the approval of a committee of the Delegations. Unfortunately, all efforts in that direction failed, and early in the morning of Thursday, July 23, I heard that at six in the evening of that day the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum, with forty-eight hours for

reply, was to be handed to the Serbian authorities in Belgrade. The die had fallen !

That day and the next passed without any event of note. No answer came from Belgrade on July 24, or the morning of Saturday, the 25th.

Serbia was taking her time. The reason was perfectly clear to me. She was asking her friends and patrons, particularly Russia, for instructions. That " localization of the conflict " which the Emperor's *entourage*, and even Count Berchtold himself expected, was therefore anything but a certainty.

On that Saturday the Duke of Cumberland and his family from Gmunden were expected for dinner with the Emperor.

In the morning I received a note in the Emperor's own handwriting, prescribing the dress to be worn by the waiting staff that night. It was a proof that the old sovereign overlooked no detail of court service even in the most critical times, and at the same time I could not resist an agreeable impression that if the Emperor could think of such trivial details it was impossible that he could be harbouring evil presentiments or a feeling that serious events were absolutely imminent. These casual instructions on 25th July, 1914, seemed to me positively a good omen.

I went to the Emperor's villa shortly after two o'clock. About 2.45 the whole of the Emperor's *suite* was assembled and almost at once the Emperor himself appeared, coming from the park.

Instead of taking the usual course of immediately entering the hall and exchanging a few words with everyone present, the sovereign stood in the open doorway, gave us a silent and quite casual greeting, and then passed swiftly through the hall and began to walk feverishly up and down the terrace with his hands behind his back. It was only too plain that the Emperor was in such a state of excitement and distress that he could hardly keep himself under control.

It was only when the Duke of Cumberland's family drove up that he pulled himself together, walked to the carriages in his usual courtly way, welcomed his guests and led them to the dining-room. We all followed.

During the meal I could watch the Emperor very closely from where I was sitting. It was quite easy to see how utterly absent-minded he was, and how difficult he found it to concentrate sufficiently to keep some sort of conversation with his neighbours going and try to perform his duties as host.

As if by common consent the Serbian business was not so much as mentioned during the whole meal.

After lunch we adjourned for a few minutes to the terrace and smoked while the Emperor and his royal guests went round chatting with the company for a short time. By four o'clock the party had dispersed.

I went straight back to my office. On my way there I observed a considerable crowd which had collected at the entrance to the park and even in the Ebenseer Strasse. At first I thought this assemblage was in honour of the guests from Gmunden. But when I made my way through the crowd I was assailed on all sides with the question whether any answer had yet come from Belgrade. Unfortunately I could only reply in the negative.

When I reached the office, I decided I wouldn't leave it again until I received more definite news from Vienna.

Just after half-past five my door opened and Count Berchtold came in with one of his officials. He gave me a nod and asked whether we also had had no news from Belgrade. I said no, but pointed out that the War Minister's aide-de-camp had given us an assurance that any message reaching Vienna would be delivered to me by telephone at once. I asked the Count and his companion to sit down. They did so, and Berchtold said he preferred to wait with me.

It was just about twenty minutes to six.

At six o'clock Serbia's time for reply expired.

The Minister looked obviously exhausted and depressed. He hardly said a word. I handed him the morning paper, which had just come in with the post. He thanked me and said I must not allow his presence to disturb me in my work at all. It was quite plain that he didn't want to talk.

The uncanny silence in the room was only broken by the monotonous tick of the clock on the wall. It struck quarter to six, six, quarter past six. Each of these quarters of an hour seemed an eternity.

Berchtold then rose, beckoned to his companion, and said :

" We shan't hear anything to-day now. Let's take a short walk." He shook hands with me. " If I'm wanted I shall be found at the hotel." Both gentlemen went out.

Hardly ten minutes later the telephone bell rang. I was called up from Vienna by the War Minister's aide-de-camp on urgent business.

The hour of decision was at hand. My heart beat furiously as I put my ear to the receiver and caught the following words :

" Following message has just been telephoned from Semlin through Budapest : '*Just before 6 o'clock the Serbian reply to our ultimatum was handed to our Minister in Belgrade. The Minister considers it unacceptable and has immediately left Belgrade with his suite.*' "

A sharp " No " came in reply to my question whether any details of the Serbian note were known.

I rang off and called up the Hotel Bauer, where Count Berchtold was staying. I was told that the Minister had not yet returned.

What was I to do. I did not waste much time in reflection. The Emperor's agitation at luncheon was still before my eyes. It seemed to me obvious I ought to go to him at once. In accordance with my custom, I quickly wrote down what the War Minister's aide-de-camp had told me,

ran down the stairs and was about to forge my way through the crowd still waiting at the park gates, when I caught sight of a car. The chauffeur was an utter stranger, but I ordered him to drive to the imperial villa at once. The tone of my voice made all thought of refusal impossible. The chauffeur was quite taken aback at first, but he obeyed unquestioningly.

I was at the villa in a trice. The gentleman-in-waiting on duty at once reported my presence to the Emperor and I stepped into his cabinet.

The Emperor came forward with a questioning glance. I gave him the news I had just received from Vienna. He listened with his eyes fixed on me and his features rigid. Then, in a thick, choking voice which could hardly struggle through his throat, a voice quite unknown to me, he said :

" So it *is !* "

I handed the Emperor the paper on which I had written the sinister message. The Emperor took it, turned to his desk with tired, tottering steps, dropped heavily into his chair and reached for his glasses which were lying on the writing-pad. His hands trembled so violently that it was some time before he could fix his glasses. When he had done so he slowly read the words which I had already given him orally.

Then he put the note down and sat silent for a long time, lost in thought. All at once, probably involuntarily, he raised his arm in a kind of defensive movement. In so doing the ring on his right hand caught a glass tray on which there were pens and pencils, and there was a harsh, discordant sound. The Emperor started. So did I. It may sound far-fetched, but that screech which broke the silence and sounded as if something had burst or been smashed will ring in my ears for ever.

The Emperor then re-read the note with the news from Belgrade, and finally remarked, as if talking to himself, but quite audibly :

"Even if diplomatic relations are broken off it doesn't necessarily mean war."

So even at that hour the Emperor was evidently hopeful that the war could still be avoided. He recovered his composure to a certain extent, for when he took off his glasses his hands trembled less than before. I noticed that particularly.

A breathless silence followed. It seemed to me unending, though it cannot have been more than a minute. The Emperor rose from his chair and said in a sharp tone, which was usually quite foreign to him :

"The Foreign Minister must come to me at once. *At once!*"

I bowed and turned to the door. As I pressed the handle the Emperor nodded and said in his usual friendly and natural way :

"Adieu, and many thanks for coming at once yourself!"

At this time of day I have only a dim memory of what subsequently occurred on that day ; how I conveyed the Emperor's orders to Count Berchtold and told Count Paar and others the news from Belgrade. But I shall never forget a single detail of the memorable moments I spent in the Emperor's cabinet in the late afternoon of 25th July, 1914. In accordance with my practice I wrote down the few words he uttered immediately afterwards. Those words, and still more the impression, my sovereign's whole behaviour made upon me told me then, as they tell me now, that nothing was further from his mind than to release the dogs of war and, indeed, that he found comfort in the thought that even if diplomatic relations had been broken off it did not necessarily mean war.

Such was the course of events from the double crime at Sarajevo on the 28th June to the break with Serbia on the 25th July. What was the course of events between the break with Serbia and the Emperor Francis Joseph's proclamation ?

What happened in the days immediately following the 25th July which broke the old monarch's consistent determination to maintain peace ?

In my opinion the best answer to this momentous question is contained in an extract from a letter which Prince Montenuovo wrote to me later :

" In July, 1914, the Emperor decided in favour of war, and his decision was based on the *existing* situation. He certainly had to force that decision out of his high sense of duty after the most careful consideration of all the alternatives, and in the fulfilment of those peremptory obligations imposed upon him by his high position—obligations he had never found easy or simple. The suggestion that the Emperor was driven to that decision by backstairs influences is as insulting to him as the fiction that I myself played such a part is to me."

No one can doubt that there is the broad stamp of truth about these very definite words. There are times when a nation, driven into a corner, has no choice but to appeal to war as the *ultima ratio*. It is probable that in 1914 the statesmen of Austria-Hungary considered—and surely not entirely without reason—that they were already confronted with such an emergency. But I cannot resist a feeling that the Emperor Francis Joseph, who had the last word, at any rate officially, let himself be drawn into a catastrophical situation without definite intentions, fixed aims or a clear appreciation of what might be expected to happen.

He was always essentially *against* the war. That such was his standpoint is a fact which cannot be argued away, and imposes its own acceptance. It is explained by the further fact that Francis Joseph had little confidence either in his diplomats or his generals, while of late years he had come to doubt even the efficiency of his army. He had therefore to be urged forward, step by step, on the path which ultimately led to the destruction of the Danube Monarchy.

So far from being easy, this was a most formidable task for those who, no doubt from the purest motives—I make no kind of imputation against their *bona fides*—were determined to secure an appeal to arms. Thus it is hardly to be wondered at that of the means chosen some were open to objection, particularly as with every step that brought the Emperor and his subjects nearer to war the old sovereign's invincible optimism made him indulge in a creditable conviction that the next one, potentially longer and more dangerous, could still be avoided. In July, 1914, Francis Joseph clung to that straw, all the more fervently because he knew that neither the Government nor the General Staff in Germany was anxious for war. That much is certain.

In this connection it is exceedingly regrettable that neither the official reports which the unquestionably incompetent Austro-Hungarian ambassador in Berlin sent to our Foreign Office, nor the oral information which the German ambassador in Vienna, von Tschirschky, felt called upon to give, were of a nature to keep Count Berchtold (surely anything but a far-seeing statesman) and his colleagues continuously posted as to the real state of public feeling in Germany. Indeed, the impression we gathered was exactly the opposite, and it has been expressly confirmed by the strong words of a very well-informed German diplomat with whom I talked quite recently :

" If it hadn't been for the unprecedentedly stupid, or, rather, downright criminal behaviour of the so-called statesmen in Berlin and the aggressiveness of Count Pourtalès, the German ambassador in St. Petersburg, the situation would probably have been saved even at the last moment."

Hence the fact that particularly in Austria large numbers of people are even to-day absolutely unshakable in their conviction that the Hapsburg Empire was driven into the war by Germany. It is quite untrue. The bottom is knocked out of the suggestion by Count Berchtold's declaration (to

which I have referred previously) that Austria-Hungary's freedom of action against Serbia was not influenced or restricted by Germany in any way.

At this point events followed hard on each other's heels. That is proved by the news which reached Ischl from Vienna during the Saturday night and the early hours of Sunday, the 26th July. It was all too plain for words that everyone was seriously reckoning on the outbreak of hostilities, and that appropriate preparations were being made in frantic haste. It was known, too, that as early as Friday, the 24th July, i.e., the very day after the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum was received, the Serbians had begun to mobilize. They obviously had no intention whatever of accepting the Austro-Hungarian demands. Could not that have been foreseen on our side ?

During the same Saturday night Count Berchtold had issued a binding declaration in St. Petersburg and Rome that in its dispute with Serbia the Monarchy was not aiming at any kind of territorial aggrandizement. In that way the Foreign Minister hoped to keep Russia from intervening as well as to lose no time in getting round the awkward corner of Balkan compensation provided for in the Triple Alliance with Italy.

But if so, whatever was the real object of our unfortunate ultimatum ? Was it the prelude merely to a so-called " punitive expedition " without any of the usual positive objects ? If so, events were to show that it was very ill-considered and made a highly unpractical start.

Everyone, the Emperor included, had undoubtedly assumed that Serbia would simply accept our ultimatum. When things turned out otherwise, good advice was scarce. The next thing was to strain every nerve to limit the conflict to the war with Serbia. On the other hand, it appeared to be quite foolish to indulge in illusions on that subject, for Colonels Zankievicz and Winneken, the Russian military attachés in

Vienna from 1909 to 1914, had often told me to my face that Russia would always be found at Serbia's side. They were emphatic on the point the moment I started to discuss our differences with Belgrade. In any case I suggested that the Emperor should return to Vienna as soon as possible to be present personally on the main stage. But as the Archduke Charles (who had been appointed colonel in the Emperor's Hussars, No. 1, on the 24th July), the Austro-Hungarian envoy in Belgrade, Baron von Giesl, and Major Gellinek, our military attaché there, were to be received by the Emperor in Ischl and all arrangements had been made, my proposal that the court should remove to Vienna was not adopted for the time being.

About mid-day on Sunday, the 26th July, a telephone message reached me from the War Ministry in Vienna that the Voivode Putnik, Chief of Staff of the Serbian Army, had been held up at Budapest and interned as a prisoner of war. He had been staying at an Austrian spa for a cure, and had been surprised by the news of the breaking-off of diplomatic relations, and tried to get back to Belgrade at break-neck speed. In Vienna an exaggerated importance was attributed to this incident, because it was assumed that at this particular moment the absence of Putnik, who was rightly regarded as the head of the Serbian Army, would cause difficulties and confusion in the preparations of the enemy's army. As was only to be expected, the Emperor then ordered Putnik's release, and he continued his journey without let or hindrance.

In accordance with Sunday custom the Emperor took luncheon with his family and suite at half-past two in the villa at Ischl. As the gentlemen assembled there was, of course, a lively discussion on the subject of the event which had made us hold our breath since the previous evening. What struck me most was the absolute confidence with which everyone, without exception, maintained that the

quarrel between Serbia and ourselves would remain localized and no one else would be drawn in. When I gave my reasons for believing the contrary—which I could support by reference to the confirmation of my previous suspicions, that Serbia had asked and received definite instructions from Russia before she replied to the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum—I was thoroughly unpopular, and Count Paar interrupted my remarks by turning to me, and exclaiming furiously :

" Berchtold assured me only yesterday evening that we should have to deal with Serbia alone, and he ought to know ! "

The appearance of the Emperor put an end to the conversation. We went in to lunch. It was the last meal which the old Emperor took with any considerable party in that Ischl villa, which a thousand memories had made so dear to him. As if he knew it he was very quiet and absorbed. The meal passed in an unusual and oppressive silence. There was no conversation afterwards, a most striking feature. The Emperor rose without a word, and returned straight to his cabinet.

A melancholy Sunday !

It passed very slowly, too, for dispatches and reports came in until the night was far advanced, while the telephone to Vienna was going all the time.

At the morning conference on the Monday, July 27, the Emperor reserved his decision with regard to the return to Vienna until after the Ambassador, Vladimir Giesl, had presented his report in the afternoon.

" That's a good sign," said Count Paar cheerfully. The Emperor's remark had shaken him in his usual pessimism. " Just you see if everything doesn't turn out all right ! "

How gladly would I have shared his pleasant anticipations. Unfortunately, I could only heave a sigh of resignation, and

reply with Goethe's words: "Noch am Grabe pflanzt der Mensch die Hoffnung auf!"*

In the afternoon Baron Giesl von Gieslingen and Major Gellinek arrived in Ischl. The former reported immediately to the Emperor, while the latter called on me while he waited.

Gellinek obviously cherished the most extravagant hopes. He kept telling me with facile eloquence that the Serbian army had been utterly exhausted by the two years of war in the Balkans, that it was extremely badly off for equipment and armament, and that the Belgrade Government could bring hardly 100,000 efficient troops into the field against us.

"With six Austro-Hungarian army corps," he cried enthusiastically, "we shall force Serbia to her knees in a month, and occupy the whole of her territory."

He told me of the panic and hopeless terror which the ultimatum had produced everywhere in Belgrade. He met my objection that if that were so it would have been easy for Serbia to avert further peril by unconditional acceptance by the remark that Belgrade was prepared to stake everything for motives of national prestige, and that Serbian patriotism had been lashed into such a fury of fanaticism that the country would rather go down fighting than yield to the categorical summons of Vienna.

The following morning Count Paar told me that Baron Giesl's views were entirely in agreement with those of Gellinek.

"It was a real comfort to talk with Giesl yesterday," he said. "His words quite carried me out of the doleful atmosphere here."

I confess I was quite revolted at this piece of bombast. But it was apparently only a very cheap way of obtaining credit and authority. I had plenty of opportunity of observing the same phenomenon subsequently.

* Man will plant the seed of hope even on the grave.

On that day war was actually declared on Serbia. When I handed the necessary document to Count Paar he shook his head mournfully, and dropped a remark which gave me much food for thought later on :

" This may be all right, but all I can say is that men of eighty-four years of age don't sign war proclamations ! "

Yet that is exactly what the old Emperor Francis Joseph did, for all his world-wide reputation as the apostle of peace !

The declaration of war and proclamation were accompanied by the partial mobilization of the Austro-Hungarian army and the mobilization of the fleet. We entered the struggle resolutely and of our own free will. The Emperor's original determination to avert a conflict had given way at last !

On Wednesday, July 29, the Emperor at last ordered our return to Schönbrunn for early the next morning. In issuing his instructions he was moved and distressed as I had never seen him before. He could hardly speak, and gave tongue to the agitation that tormented him in the words :

" Where are we going ? What's in store for us ? "

When I told Count Paar of this I gave him a questioning look. He could not meet my gaze, but stared uncomfortably at the ground.

In a low voice he told me that the Emperor had been driven in a corner and the war forced on him by representations that Serbian troops had already invaded Bosnia and Southern Hungary and occupied portions of our territory.

I absolutely refused to believe such a suggestion ! It was not only contrary to what Major Gellinek had told me two days before, but in view of the short time that had elapsed it was a physical impossibility. My suspicions began to grow. To wean the Emperor from his last longings for peace he had been deceived by false representations that he had no other alternative but to declare war on Serbia because the Serbs had already crossed the Drina and the Save in

force! Some attributed the trick to Count Berchtold. It was only natural that he should be suspected, but his responsibility has not been proved.

Here was a puzzle!

Count Paar solved the dilemma by regarding the joint Finance Minister, Bilinski, as the instigator of the declaration of war; but Bilinski had not been at Ischl at all, and he could not have had much chance of bringing off so complicated and dangerous a manœuvre from Vienna.

The sun shone gloriously and Ischl looked its loveliest as we bade it farewell on Thursday, July 30.

The Emperor said a few words of farewell to the officials present on the platform. When he said good-bye to Father Stadler, the splendid Ischl priest, the latter quietly blessed him with the sign of the cross and accompanied his action with a hearty: "To our next meeting, your Majesty!" As he entered the special train the Emperor was greatly moved, and remarked: "Father Stadler couldn't have given me a finer farewell message. If only his wish comes true!"

Providence willed otherwise, for Francis Joseph never saw his beloved Ischl again.

The Great War had begun!

It is a matter for debate whether the military prospects of the Danube Monarchy would have been better between 1908 and 1913, or whether it would have been wiser to embark upon that "preventive" war which General Conrad-Hötzendorf, Chief of the General Staff, had been advocating since 1907. I need only recall Bismarck's weighty words: "When you start a war you know when the first shot is fired, but you can *never* tell when the last will be!"

In any case, the fact that, with the exception of Germany, all the combatants were in the ranks of our enemies and that even our allies, Italy and Rumania, joined them, proves that the foreign policy of the Danube Monarchy was on totally false lines and demonstrates the lamentable failure

of our diplomacy. First of all the diplomats were absolutely convinced that the ultimatum would be accepted. Then they counted on the localization of the quarrel with Serbia, and in the end they witnessed England's declaration of war on Francis Joseph, the same England whose King, Edward VII., had offered Serbia to the Emperor a few years before!

Who can doubt that it was the very existence of Austria-Hungary which was at stake? In my opinion the Hapsburg Empire had its last chance of solving the Balkan problem, and thereby assuring the future development of the monarchy, in 1903 and the two following years. There was no chance afterwards.

On June 13, 1903, the Obrenovitch family was removed from the throne by violence, and succeeded by Peter Karageorgevitch, who notoriously had aided and abetted all the efforts and conspiracies to unite all those speaking the Southern-Slav tongue under one sceptre. At a blow the relations of the Danube Monarchy to its south-eastern neighbour were changed fundamentally. The authorities in Vienna should have realized the fact and acted accordingly.

What a favourable moment it was! In February, 1904, Russia found herself involved in her critical war with Japan, and Japan's ally was—England! France would never have attacked Germany, any more than Italy would have attacked Austria-Hungary.

In 1903 fate was on the side of the Emperor Francis Joseph.

In the autumn of that year the Czar, Nicholas II., came to Mürzsteg to sound the Emperor on the Balkan question. It could easily have been cleared up for a long time to come. Instead of obtaining that result, the Austro-Hungarian diplomats contented themselves with certain theoretical and colourless agreements. The Russians were so overcome at

such modesty that they refused it their full confidence and suspected *arrières pensées*, than which nothing was further from the mind of Count Goluchowsky, the Foreign Minister. On the evening before the departure from Mürzsteg I had a talk about the political future of the monarchy with Mossolov, the Czar's Aide-de-Camp, and Roop, the Russian military attaché in Vienna. Mossolov said quite frankly :

" From all I hear everything will be arranged much more easily than we suspect. Many questions have just been settled by a very simple compact, especially as we were quite prepared to make several concessions, valuable concessions, in order to restore stability once and for all in the Balkans. But we didn't get quite as far as that. All the better. For the moment we can be quite satisfied ! "

But why that " we didn't get quite as far as that ? "

Was it the fault of Goluchowsky ? Perhaps, but not entirely. He certainly continued those vacillations in the foreign policy of Austria-Hungary which had characterized the work of his predecessor in office, Count Kálnoky. For a long time Kálnoky showed a marked preference for Serbia, particularly during the Serbo-Bulgarian war of 1885, thereby revealing his ignorance of where the real danger for the Danube Monarchy in the Balkans lay. Then his sympathies turned towards Bulgaria. Serbia was let down, although she was the direct neighbour of the Hapsburg Empire. The fickleness of the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Office must soon have created an impression of weakness in St. Petersburg. In influential Russian circles the view began to gain ground that Vienna did not really know what it wanted in the Balkans.

This naturally had fatal consequences.

Yet the root of the evil was to be found, not so much in the policy of the Foreign Office, as in the internal situation of the Danube Monarchy, particularly the difficulties with Hungary, which was already attacking the foundations of

the Empire. In that very year, 1903, the current of narrow-minded and short-sighted national feeling in Hungary was again flowing strong.

In that eventful August of 1914 the Emperor was the only man whose immense experience enabled him to forget nothing himself, and often to remind his ministers, advisers and generals of various essential matters which had still to be arranged.

Meanwhile, the concentration of the Austro-Hungarian army had proceeded with what on the whole was exemplary precision, or, at any rate, remarkable efficiency, which was to be ascribed to the fact that orders for the partial mobilization and the concentration against Serbia had been issued in the last days of July.

The effect was that of the sixteen Austro-Hungarian army corps eight were sent to the Bosnian and Southern Hungarian frontiers against Serbia, and eight went to Galicia to hold up the Russian armies.

This plan, which was nothing more than a mathematical division of the troops available, and revealed no profound thought, had been drawn up by General Conrad von Hötzendorf, who directed the operations of the Austro-Hungarian army in the following years and as long as the Emperor Francis Joseph lived. He was in sole charge and had unlimited powers.

In view of the Emperor's great age it was, of course, impossible for him to lead his armies in person. A suitable representative was not easy to find, as the Emperor, in accordance with tradition, had a member of his House in mind for this post. At last a sufficient measure of agreement was reached, and he appointed General the Archduke Frederick, who had hitherto commanded the Austrian Landwehr, to be Commander-in-Chief. At the same time he was privately deprived of any practical control over the

army by special orders and specifically instructed that he was to approve and cover with his authority all decisions of the Chief of the General Staff.

Thus, in practice, General von Conrad was armed with powers such as no one has ever possessed in the Danube Monarchy before, especially as Army Headquarters was assigned an extensive authority to intervene in general political and domestic affairs.

This remarkable organization of the supreme military authority was destined to prove itself an over-hasty and rather unhappy compromise, perhaps for that very reason. At first the Emperor objected strongly to this antique solution of a difficult and important problem. He would have preferred to command his army himself, at any rate, nominally, and, as his advanced age kept him tied to Vienna, to send the Chief of the General Staff to the front with the necessary organizing staff. Baron von Conrad did not like this suggestion, however, as it restricted his powers. So, even in the early days of August the General Staff intentionally, and not unskilfully, started an ominous rumour about an up-to-date version of the notorious " Court Council of War," and it came to the ears of the Emperor, as it was meant to do. The manœuvre was not unsuccessful, for in the end the Emperor allowed the fact that the Archduke Frederick was the nephew and heir of Field-Marshal the Archduke Albrecht (the victor of Custozza in 1866) and the grandson of Field-Marshal the Archduke Charles (the victor of Aspern in 1809) to persuade him into appointing the Archduke nominal Commander-in-Chief, while the *de facto* leader was von Conrad, who had all the great powers and prerogatives of the post in his own hands.

It was just because the Emperor had no particular confidence even in the Chief of the General Staff that from the very start—whatever folk may say—he had such small hopes of a successful handling of his armies. And it was just because

the Emperor of all men, the highest in the land, cherished this uneasy feeling that it communicated itself, slowly but unceasingly, to ever wider circles. Even by the end of August I heard many despondent remarks from members of the Emperor's entourage, including even Count Paar.

In the first days of the war, when we could still hope that we should have to deal with Serbia alone, there was an idea of establishing General Headquarters in the South-Hungarian town of Ujvidék (Neusatz). In view of the unexpectedly swift intervention of Russia in the war there was nothing for it but to transfer headquarters immediately to the Galician fortress of Przemýsl.

The Emperor remained at Schönbrunn, which was destined to be his sole and permanent residence until his death.

Francis Joseph's isolation from the world was henceforth to be an actual reality, for the Grand Chamberlain, Prince Montenuovo, acting with the best intentions, closed that part of the park immediately contiguous to the palace which was open to the public in normal times. Thus the Emperor's residence at Schönbrunn was not far removed from imprisonment. He was, as it were, interned. The reason assigned for this step was that in the stormy times to come there might be popular demonstrations, and care must be taken that the sovereign heard and saw nothing of them.

On the other hand, it is obvious that the Emperor's complete seclusion from public life had certain very serious and principally moral disadvantages, which before long all the world could see. Men began to speak of him as of a mythical, non-existent person. Rumours that he had died and that his death was being kept secret by those about him —as in the classic case of Sultan Soliman II.—gained currency and occasionally produced no little excitement. In educated circles, on the other hand, it was rumoured that

the Emperor had grown weak-minded in his old age, and was being purposely held prisoner by his entourage so that they could secure all power for themselves and govern exactly as they liked. This version was aimed principally at Prince Montenuovo, whose actions were regarded as open to this kind of attack.

About the middle of August operations began both in the northern and southern theatres of war.

The reports of these operations came to the Emperor through General Headquarters alone. In this matter also its authority was untrammelled, because it could influence his decisions and the way they were framed to its own purposes.

As before, all ministers, including the military heads, such as the War Minister, General Baron von Krobatin, the Austrian Defence Minister, General Baron von Georgi, and his Hungarian colleague, General von Hazai, had direct access to the sovereign personally. These three were thoroughly efficient officers, who were in every way equal to the demands of their respective offices, and deservedly enjoyed the Emperor's fullest confidence. The same holds good of Admiral Haus, the excellent Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet.

Amidst the first clash of arms fell the Emperor's birthday, on August 18, 1914.

An enormous number of congratulatory telegrams arrived, though, of course, there were none from countries with which Austria-Hungary was at war. With one of them I was particularly struck. It was from the Rumanian General Averescu, to Count Paar, and one of its sentences ran as follows :

" I particularly hope that His Majesty will find himself able to bear up against the shocks inherent to all wars, even the most successful ones."

Whereas most of the telegrams were put before the

Emperor in bulk, nothing being said about their individual contents, and answered formally, I read out Averescu's congratulations to the Emperor word for word. The old man shook his head and said :

" Well meant, of course. *But is this war going to be successful for us? Even at this stage everything seems to point otherwise!* "

Thus that fundamentally pessimistic outlook which characterized the Emperor throughout the war found unblushing expression even in the first few days. During the next two years a whole series of remarks made by him confirmed the impression that Francis Joseph had no confidence in victory whatever. I was staggered by the old monarch's lack of confidence in a successful outcome of the mighty conflict. I could not help remembering how Napoleon had endeavoured to justify the risk of desperate enterprises—and was any enterprise more desperate than the struggle of the Central Empires with the rest of the world combined ?—solely with the remark : " C'est la foi qui sauve ! "

Francis Joseph was never inspired by that " faith." Thus we arrive at the paradox which I have always found absolutely incomprehensible. How could the old sovereign have embarked upon a war which he regarded as a lost war from the very start ? There is, of course, a problematic answer which I frequently received when I put that ominous question : Austria-Hungary's leaders wanted war, but only a war with Serbia. It was not anticipated that that conflict would become a world war. The eventuality had not been allowed for, and when it materialized there was no alternative but to make the best of it.

In Galicia as against Serbia the imperial armies took the offensive tone to the principles Conrad had instilled into them. Yet Conrad had miscalculated the enemy's strength and intentions in both theatres of war.

In the north it soon appeared that the Russians had

carried through their mobilization far more swiftly than Conrad had anticipated or been willing to anticipate, with the result that they unexpectedly appeared on Galician soil in enormous solid masses. In the emergency thus caused Austro-Hungarian troops were rushed up to meet them, and sent into action in driblets as fast as the railways could discharge them. It was an over-hasty and apparently unsystematic and hand-to-mouth proceeding, and the effect was that the Russian advance could be held up only temporarily and locally.

This development showed that Conrad's strategic calculations were all wrong. Apparently he had anticipated a Russian offensive with their main force against the northern frontier of Galicia, whereas the Russian torrent, in fact, flowed in from the east. The Austro-Hungarian generals, Dankl and Auffenberg, who had invaded Poland when operations began, certainly won partial and local victories, but the enemy's striking force swiftly and surely over-ran Eastern Galicia, captured Lemberg on September 3, and could not be held up before it reached the San on the fortified Przemýsl–Jaroslav–Sieniava line. Dankl and Auffenburg were hastily brought back to the centre, and Conrad's offensive had entirely collapsed after a few weeks and given place to a highly precarious defensive in Central Galicia imposed upon him by the enemy. The five corps now hastily transferred from the south-east arrived only just in time for this second stage.

General Headquarters could remain no longer in Przemýsl, which was now in the battle front. It was withdrawn, first to Neusandec and then Teschen. In that town the Archduke Frederick occupied a large castle. Headquarters was installed there for more than two years, and no one thought of making any change, even when Teschen had become so far from the front that it seemed to have no advantages whatever as headquarters.

Events in the south-east had taken the same course as in the north.

Our forces which had crossed the Drina from Bosnia were immediately thrown back by the Serbians, and as more than half of the units employed against Serbia had to be transferred to Galicia as the result of events in the north, our offensive came to a complete standstill almost before it had started.

The obstinate and successful resistance of the Serbians caused Francis Joseph no little astonishment. How was it consistent with all that Ambassador Baron von Giesl and Major Gellinek had reported on July 27? The explanation was not far to seek, even then. When the ultimatum made the situation exceedingly tense in Serbia, the Serbians naturally thought that all they could expect was an invasion by the Austro-Hungarians in overwhelming force. On the contrary, nothing happened for days and even weeks, as even a *partial* mobilization was not ordered by Vienna until after the Serbian reply was received on July 25. The undoubted depression of the Serbians after Berchtold's declaration of war was received gave place to immense enthusiasm when they realized that the mobilization of the Serbian army could proceed without opposition. Their spirits rose from hour to hour, for there could be no question of any vigorous intervention by the imperial armies. There was no time. It could not well have been otherwise, as no preparations whatever had been made by the other side.

The old Emperor soon realized the great and tragic scale of this mistake. In those anxious August days he spoke to Count Paar in what were for him unusually harsh terms about Count Berchtold's actions, and expressed the opinion that after the ambassador, Giesl, had abruptly broken off relations with Serbia on July 25th, it was nothing short of inanity not to resume them again by a dispassionate examination of the Serbian answer to the ultimatum followed by a reply. In any case, it was now much too late.

The losses suffered by the Austro-Hungarian formations in the north and south were heavy, indeed enormous, a fact which deprived the Emperor of all grounds for optimism in the future, because it was just the best active units which had been terribly decimated at the very outset of operations. The real test of war showed exactly how fatal it was that General Conrad never had any idea of economy of force. The Emperor was a prey to the most unlimited apprehension on that account. It was about this time that he used the melancholy words he was so often to repeat :

" We can't find any suitable sphere of activity for a Chief of the General Staff with such soaring plans. We'd be far better off with a man who doesn't want to bridge the ocean ! "

General Potiorek, who was in command in the south-east, turned the Emperor's latent discontent with Conrad to his own advantage by using his friend, the Chief of the Military Cabinet, to deprive General Headquarters of all authority or control over him. Although General von Conrad objected, the Emperor conferred on General Potiorek the autonomous powers he desired.

The act was an obvious vote of censure upon the Chief of the General Staff, and the Emperor actually meant it in that sense, if only because Conrad had mercilessly removed a large number of generals from their posts on the ground of the initial failures in the northern theatre. The Emperor was very indignant and remarked in an angry tone : " Conrad ought to have known his men before ! Now that so much mischief has been done this wholesale pensioning-off is nothing but a confession of his own failure."

Meanwhile the Germans in one triumphal sweep had occupied Belgium and invaded Northern France. In the extreme north-east General von Hindenburg had overwhelmed the Russians at Tannenberg. The Emperor William II. reported all these successes to his aged ally with pardonable satisfaction and justified pride. Francis Joseph did not fail

to realize that Hindenburg's victories were of greater strategic importance than his own successes at Krasnik and Komarov, nor did he forget that the brilliant feats of arms in the west had only been possible because the Austro-Hungarian forces had attracted the mighty Russian armies to themselves, so that Germany could protect her eastern frontier with a thin screen of Landwehr formations and use the bulk of her active troops in France. Yet his dissatisfaction with the General Staff was so great that towards the end of August he remarked for the first time with a deep sigh: "If only we had German leadership!"

From this, and many similar comments made by the Emperor subsequently, Count Paar concluded that his sovereign would rather have had the Austro-Hungarian armies under a German command, and indeed regarded it as the sole guarantee of ultimate victory. That view was shared by Prince Montenuovo.

The murderous war continued. The battle of the Marne was fought. The Russians captured Czernowitz—for the first time—and then the scene changed. They were compelled to raise the siege of Przemýsl and on October 22 to evacuate Czernowitz.

On October 10 King Charles of Rumania died. He was not only one of the old Emperor's most faithful personal friends, but he had a genuine preference and affection for the Danube Monarchy as well as Germany, the land of his birth. The death of King Charles affected the Emperor very deeply. He knew only too well that he had lost one of the few comrades on whom he could always count. He told me so himself when I gave him the monthly lists of royal birthdays, from which I had removed the name of King Charles, adding those of the new King, Ferdinand and Queen Marie.

"You'll soon be crossing them off too," he said in a sad voice. "They'll join my enemies sooner or later."

The fortunes of war continued in our favour. In Turkey

we found a new and most valuable ally, and in the south-east General Potiorek managed, at the cost of very heavy losses, to get a firm foothold in Serbia and press forward to Valievo. As a result of this operation parts of the Fifth Army, under its commander, General Frank, entered Belgrade on December 2, the sixty-sixth anniversary of the Emperor's accession. To mark the occasion, General Frank sent the Emperor a telegram announcing the event and couched in terms of reverential respect, but, strange to say, the act made a most unfavourable impression upon the old sovereign. In a tone of sharp censure he remarked that generals ought to concentrate on leading their armies and not bother about his anniversaries.

Unfortunately the old Emperor was in fact quite right in his adverse opinion of the Belgrade announcement. Within a few days news came in that General Potiorek had precipitately retired into Bosnia and Hungary, after suffering the most fearful losses, and on December 15 Belgrade had to be evacuated almost before it had been occupied.

The fact that his army had been routed by the Serbians enraged the old Emperor all the more because he at once foresaw the political consequences of this inexcusable defeat.

"How on earth can we pursue even a tolerable foreign policy when we fight so badly?" he often exclaimed to the amazed Count Paar, who utterly failed to soothe his exasperated sovereign.

It was impossible to make head or tail of Potiorek's dispatches and his letters to Baron von Bolfras, the Chief of the Military Cabinet; but it was amazing that after this latest appalling disaster not a word was said at first about the possibility of Potiorek's dismissal. General von Bolfras did more than merely hesitate. He seemed to regard the whole affair as merely the fortune of war, which we might hope to put right before long. The Emperor sent his deputy Chief of the Military Cabinet, Lieutenant-General von Marterer, to Peterwardein, where General Potiorek had established his

headquarters after his defeat, to get first-hand information as to the situation.

On the strength of Marterer's report Potiorek was finally relieved of his command by the Emperor and replaced by General the Archduke Eugen, one of the few men in whom the sovereign had really unlimited confidence.

These events were not mentioned too freely in the Military Cabinet, as its Chief, General von Bolfras, had participated in the dismissal of Potiorek, of whom he had an extraordinarily high opinion, with the greatest reluctance. It was only when I had taken up my appointment as Deputy Director of the Military Archives at Vienna, in 1918, that I had an opportunity of seeing the relevant documents and records. I then came to the conclusion that Bolfras' high opinion of General Potiorek was justified, as the latter had really fallen a sacrifice to too accommodating subordinates. Unfortunately this distressing but by no means infrequent phenomenon could only be described as in a certain sense peculiarly "Austrian." It found its climax in the fact that orders from a superior, even such orders as were no longer applicable to the situation at the moment, were followed blindly, mechanically and to the letter by those whose duty it was to execute them, however high their position and however great the powers conferred upon them. This was particularly fatal in war, because the habit of shirking responsibility had unfortunately become neither more nor less than a system in the Austro-Hungarian army and was fruitful of the most serious consequences.

The Potiorek affair was a case in point.

After the capture of Valievo at a very high cost in life Potiorek's army would in any case have urgently needed several days' rest, perhaps several weeks, as the supply of food, clothing and ammunition on the wretched roads was an extremely slow business and a large part of the stores was still accumulating in Croatia and Bosnia, where the lines of communication were congested. The mischief had reached such

heights that the Austro-Hungarian units in the Valievo sector were absolutely unfit to fight.

General Potiorek knew nothing of such deficiencies, for—as I heard from several unimpeachable authorities—he never left the four walls of his office at headquarters because he had gone in perpetual fear of his own personal safety since the tragic June 28, and never ventured forth among the troops. In his decisions he was thus dependent solely upon the reports of his corps commanders and all his operations were based upon what they told him.

When Valievo was reached the commander of the 15th Corps reported the bad condition of his units, in accordance with the facts, and urgently requested a pause in the operations. The commander of the 16th Corps, General Wurm, who knew of Potiorek's desire to press on ruthlessly against the Serbians so as to crown the advance with a great and decisive victory at the earliest possible moment, could think of nothing better than to lose no time in describing the situation to his army commander in such glowing terms that an immediate resumption of the operations seemed not merely possible but the only proper course. Thereupon Potiorek ordered the advance of his army to continue, in spite of the strongly conflicting reports and without bothering to ascertain the real situation.

When everything had gone hopelessly wrong General Wurm certainly asked to be relieved of his command, and proposed a legal inquiry into his own actions, while Potiorek, without stopping to reflect, also accepted unreservedly full responsibility for what had happened in order to exculpate Wurm. Unfortunately this noble and chivalrous action of the two officers did not bring back to life any of the many unfortunates who had perished miserably through their mistakes.

As I have said, I only found out all this in 1918, from my examination of the war records. Much of it was known to von Marterer in December, 1914, and accordingly he at once

took the view, as did General von Bolfras, that Wurm was mainly responsible and should be relieved of his command at once. But as Potiorek, as Commander-in-Chief, had to be sacrificed as well, he was allowed to do duty as scapegoat for everyone, and Wurm remained at his post. To me the only remarkable feature of the whole affair was that General von Conrad, who was always ready enough to get rid of generals, even for the most trivial mistakes, actually retained General Wurm in his post, and in fact subsequently gave him a better appointment, in which he certainly made the most of his opportunities.

It was long before the facts of this remarkable affair ceased to be discussed in the Aides-de-Camp's office at Schönbrunn—the meeting-place where views on the events of the day were exchanged.

The usual course of procedure at these discussions was much as follows: Before eight o'clock in the morning I went with the daily report to Schönbrunn, accompanied by Baron von Bolfras, the Chief of the Military Cabinet. At the Aides-de-Camp's office I found Count Paar, who resided permanently at the palace. Prince Montenuovo was always there, while occasionally I met Baron von Schiessl, the Director of the Civil Cabinet, the Minister-Presidents, and various ministers and high officials who were waiting for their summons to conference with the Emperor.

We spent the time in a discussion of the events of the day, in which practically everyone joined. As nearly all those present held high and responsible offices, they were of course very well informed on current affairs and future intentions and possibilities, so that I came to regard this morning talk at Schönbrunn as the most exciting event of the day.

It is not without interest to record the standpoint and outlook of the different individuals as revealed by what they said. Count Paar was and remained an out and out pessimist,

and as a rule there was good reason for his attitude. Baron von Bolfras, notwithstanding his extreme reserve, showed that he was anything but sanguine and the same must be said of Baron von Schiessl. Prince Montenuovo was all for facts and realities. The Emperor's Aides-de-Camp, on the other hand, were convinced optimists through thick and thin, a fact which was natural and proper enough in view of their comparative youth.

Prince Montenuovo was unquestionably the best informed—even on purely military affairs; and when, after Count Paar had reported to the Emperor, I went back with the Prince to the Hofburg, I had the opportunity I so much desired of getting a good deal of important information about the course of the war, and events at home and abroad.

Sometimes, but not frequently, the Archduke Charles joined the daily debating society in the Aides-de-Camp's office at Schönbrunn. As a rule this was on his return to Vienna from a visit to General Headquarters or the front. He generally joked about the pessimism which prevailed at General Headquarters, and cast meaning glances at Generals Paar and Bolfras as he did so. On one occasion he spoke his mind quite frankly:

"The further you get from the front the less confidence do you find. You've got to be at the front to realize that we shall and *must* win!"

The Archduke seemed to look round for some approving comment. None was forthcoming. It was the end of November, 1914. Bitterly disappointed, he made for the door, and said as he turned the handle:

"Courage is what's wanted!"

As he disappeared Baron von Bolfras shook his head and remarked:

"It's easy to talk! There's plenty of courage, but there's one thing we need far more, and that's *luck!* The question is: will *he* bring it?"

I have never forgotten that significant remark of the splendid and valuable old general. I often came across it later, for luck was certainly the last thing the Emperor Charles brought the Danube Monarchy.

One morning we had the former Austro-Hungarian minister in Belgrade, Vladimir Baron von Giesl, in the office at Schönbrunn. It may have been in December, 1914. He had come straight from General Headquarters, and was feeling thoroughly depressed as he had failed to obtain either military employment or the promise of a diplomatic post. While he was waiting to be summoned by the Emperor he told us some of his experiences and impressions of the Russian front. He saw everything in the darkest colours, and concluded his remarks with the proposal—which he put forward quite seriously—that we should at once look out for further allies, and in particular cede the Bukowina to Rumania to induce her to come in on our side without delay. Perhaps he was not far wrong there, but it was certainly amazing that these despairing words came from the mouth of the very man who five months before had proudly thrown down the challenge to the Serbians, and thus sounded the trumpet for the world war!

From his cabinet at Schönbrunn the old Emperor followed the course of military events with the greatest attention—and the greatest anxiety. He could hardly restrain his impatience as he waited for the daily report from General Headquarters, which was practically his only source of information. Unfortunately, the news which came in was apt to be scarce and sometimes vague. The Emperor often complained, for frequently it seemed as if the Archduke Frederick and Conrad had entirely forgotten that as head of the state he had a right to the fullest knowledge of what was happening at the front.

In his innumerable political memoranda before the war, General Conrad had insisted over and over again that in the

hour of danger all the nations of the Hapsburg Empire would stand firm as a rock and co-operate wholeheartedly for the defence of its territory. Unfortunately this prognostication proved to be unsound. Once more Conrad revealed himself the idealist who did not realize the internal condition of the Monarchy, and therefore misjudged it.

I realized this fact for the first time at the beginning of September, 1914, when a letter from the Commander of the Bohemian 8th Corps came into my hands. This officer's corps had taken part in the operations against the Serbians in August, but had been driven back in its first attacks, and had suffered huge losses, particularly in prisoners. Thereupon General Potiorek, the army commander, had promptly relieved the Corps Commander of his command, and sent him home on the ground of inefficiency. The officer in question now wrote the letter I have mentioned to Prince Thun, the Governor of Bohemia, asking his intervention with a view to a fresh command. Prince Thun sent the letter with a covering note to Count Paar, who handed it to General Bolfras, the competent authority in such matters. It appeared from this letter that even in the first days of the war, not only men, but officers and even entire companies of Czech regiments, had gone over to the enemy. We had similar reports of the behaviour of northern Slav formations only too often later on, and ultimately there was nothing for it but to make the best of this terrible phenomenon.

Potiorek's decisive defeat in Serbia continued to be the Emperor's bitterest disappointment, and it seemed as if he would never recover. He was the only man immediately to realize all the consequences of that great military disaster. On Christmas Day Count Paar said to me :

" The Emperor is quite certain that Italy will fall upon us very shortly. He thinks it would be a great mistake to harbour any illusions on the point. We've had the worst

of it against Russia and Serbia. Why should Italy wait to finish us off for good and all ? "

It was known in Vienna that after the death on October 16 of the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, San Giuliano, who had always supported the Triple Alliance, his successor Sonnino had completely abandoned the Central Powers. As early as December 9 he put forward demands for extensive cessions of territory by Austria-Hungary as the price of Italy's continued neutrality.

Thereupon Prince Bülow, the German ambassador in Rome since December 4, 1914, began to make the situation much worse for the Danube Monarchy by urging Count Berchtold to meet Sonnino's wishes in order to keep Italy in the Triple Alliance at any price. Count Berchtold, however, could not even take up the matter as the Emperor was furious at the attitude of Germany, and would not even hear of such proposals. Again and again he declared that he would rather go down in honour than barter away, except as a last resort, ancient territories bequeathed to him by his ancestors.

In the mental torment which was the offspring of his enormous responsibilities the old Emperor spent a joyless Christmas at Schönbrunn, and not even the presence of his daughters and some of their children could do anything to cheer him up. Frau Schratt told me subsequently that in his despair the Emperor had often cried :

" Oh, if Christmas were only over ! I could stop thinking how jolly it used to be in the old days at Wallsee ! "

Meanwhile the war raged on and there was violent fighting for Cracow and in the Carpathians, which the Russian armies were anxious to have behind them. On March 22, 1915, they succeeded in forcing the fortress of Przemýsl to capitulate through hunger and thus securing the San sector.

Men may think as they like about the fall of Przemýsl. It will certainly always remain an enigma that a fortress of its

strength and importance should have been supplied with stores for three months only, so that it was soon lost without completely fulfilling the task assigned to it. The Emperor was utterly dissatisfied with the explanation immediately given by the General Staff, and his original want of confidence in the army leaders was considerably intensified. He began to make no secret of his wish that the whole army should be placed unreservedly under German command.

This wish of the old sovereign was certainly quite natural, for the achievements of the Austro-Hungarian troops—with the exception of the cases of treachery and desertion among the northern Slav regiments—had not merely been beyond all praise but in many cases so superhuman as to put even the heroic deeds of former times into the shade. The very inefficiency of the leadership and the excessive strain to which the men were usually put were proof positive how splendid they were. If it had been otherwise, they would have been demoralized in a very short space of time. I shall always remember a remark which my friend the Bavarian General Pecht made to me in the spring of 1915 :

" I can't imagine better men or better fighters than the Austro-Hungarian troops. You could conquer the world with them if they were properly led. Unfortunately they're not ! "

Yet they were certainly well led when, side by side with the Germans, they passed from the Gorlice–Tarnow sector in that great offensive which at the end of May, 1915, shook the Russian front, rolled it up, and in the course of the early summer inflicted a shattering defeat on the armies of the Czar.

The Emperor's views to which I have referred explained the fact that the offensive was started in the angle of Gorlice. The Emperor supported the efforts to secure the control of the whole operations for the Germans. In that way alone would this campaign lead to a decisive victory over the Russian armies.

The whole population of the Danube Monarchy was at once full of joy and confidence and in the capital it seemed as if the exultant jubilation would never end. Its echoes were heard in our office at Schönbrunn and great was our enthusiasm.

But there was *one* who absolutely refused to allow himself to be carried away and indeed obstinately refused to share the national satisfaction. It was Count Paar.

I was extremely surprised at his attitude and could not help asking him why he showed no pleasure at this great and decisive victory. The old General shook his head and replied :

" You've to look further ahead. This is only the beginning. This victory, the scale of which I don't dispute, is taking us further and further from peace, though nothing else matters for us but peace. Our enemies are too numerous and too strong. Who knows if we shall be able to hold our own to the end ? The longer the war continues—and the effect of the present victory is to postpone the end for a considerable period—the more exhausted shall we be when fighting ceases, and the harder will be the enemy's conditions, unless fortune favours us in a way we can hardly expect. If she does not the very existence of the Monarchy may be at stake.

" Suppose the Russians had swiftly advanced and reached Budapest. We should have had peace at once, if only because no other alternative was open to us. Surely even that peace would have been a better one than the peace we may get in two, three or even four years unless we win all along the line. Yet I can't bring myself to believe in this last possibility. It seems to me too improbable ! "

I was amazed at this line of reasoning, and, in fact, rather disliked Count Paar for it. At that time I did not see that it was only the fruits of the old General's greater experience. For the operation in which the Russian front had been broken

through and rolled up had proceeded with surprising speed and smoothness.

While the Emperor proudly followed these operations he was a prey to the greatest anxiety on account of events on the south-western frontier of his empire.

As I have already said, at the end of 1914 Italy was openly inclining towards the western powers, as she regarded the failures of the Austro-Hungarian armies in Galicia and Serbia as a sure sign of a rapid collapse of the Danube Monarchy. The Emperor would not hear of the Italian Foreign Minister Sonnino's demands that certain territories should be immediately ceded, though Germany put the greatest pressure on him. Even a last desperate effort by General Prince Wedel sent specially to the old monarch by the German Emperor, was entirely without result.

This difficult situation resulted in the resignation of the Foreign Minister, Count Berchtold, on January 13, 1915. He had had time to witness the hopeless bankruptcy of all his political combinations.

That undoubtedly somewhat incompetent statesman, who could not always be taken seriously, was succeeded by the dull bureaucrat, Baron von Burian. It was certainly not a particularly happy choice, if only because Burian was regarded by all who knew him as uncommonly slow-minded and therefore incapable of grasping a rapidly changing situation. He was the last man the Emperor really needed, as he was now anxious that the new minister's first task should be to recognize when any chance of peace presented itself and exploit the opportunity at once.

Burian considered Sonnino's conditions very carefully and partially accepted them on March 9. On March 27 he made an even better offer. Count Paar told me that this had been without the Emperor's knowledge. On April 6 Sonnino demanded the immediate surrender of the Tyrol as far as the Brenner, the whole of Austrian Friuli and several

Dalmatian islands. He also required that Trieste should be made an independent free state and that Austria-Hungary should renounce all interest in Albania. When Burian reported this to Francis Joseph, in accordance with what he considered his duty, the sovereign finally rejected the outrageous demand out of hand.

Thereupon Italy joined France, England and Russia on April 25. On May 4 she denounced the Triple Alliance, and on May 23 declared war on Austria-Hungary after certain further negotiations, chiefly conducted by Germany, had come to nought.

In view of this eventuality, which had been foreseen in the early months of the year, such few Austro-Hungarian formations as could be made available were sent to the Italian frontier during the spring. They were commanded by General Dankl in the Tyrol, Rohr in Carinthia, and Boroević in the Isonzo sector, while the Archduke Eugene was appointed commander-in-chief.

The first blow in the war with Italy was delivered by the Austro-Hungarian fleet under Admiral Haus, its brilliant commander. During the night following the declaration of war it undertook a bold and successful operation against the Italian coast from Venice to Barletta, which was freely bombarded, while aircraft bombed Ancona and the arsenal at Venice. This blow secured Austria-Hungary the control of the Adriatic for some time to come. The Emperor's navy had shown that the spirit of Tegetthof was still alive and could inspire the greatest feats.

At the end of May the Italian army, under General Count Cadorna, began to attack the Archduke Eugene's lines of defence in greatly superior force. Its principal object was to break through the Isonzo front. The first great Italian offensive lasted until June 12, the second from the end of June to the middle of July; the third came in October, and the fourth lasted from the middle of November to the middle of

December, 1915. All four resulted in nothing but trifling local successes. The main positions remained firmly in the hands of the Archduke Eugene's troops.

The Emperor now appeared fully justified in his resolute refusal to surrender any territory to Italy as the price of her continued neutrality, especially as the defensive successes in the south-west were accompanied by promising offensive triumphs in the north-east.

On June 3 German and Austro-Hungarian troops recovered Przemýsl. The Russians were driven from the lower San, the Visnia, Sieniava and Jaroslav, and then they lost Lemberg.

It was with considerable misgiving that Count Paar now ventured to suggest to the overworked old Emperor that he should take a holiday and visit Ischl, at any rate for a few weeks. Francis Joseph, however, rejected the proposal quite angrily and would not even listen to the idea of removing to the Villa of Hermes in the Tiergarten at Lainz, where he had enjoyed himself so thoroughly four years before. Nothing could bring him from his hard work at his desk at Schönbrunn.

It was in these exciting days at the beginning of May that I was promoted Major-General. Even with my new rank I remained at my old post and all that happened was that my official title was changed to " General, attached for service with the Imperial Aides-de-Camp's department."

In July the armies of the Central Powers in Galicia swerved sharply northwards and formed three great army groups, Hindenburg's on the left wing, Prince Leopold of Bavaria's in the centre and Mackensen's on the right wing. All the Russian armies between the Vistula and the Bug were to be enveloped. Hindenburg advanced into Kurland and seized the crossings of the Narev. Prince Leopold captured Warsaw on August 5 and Mackensen's troops stormed Ivangorod. On August 20 Novo Georgievsk was captured and on August 26 the great fortress of Brest Litovsk itself. The next day

Olita fell, on August 31 Lutsk, on September 2 Grodno, while on September 19 the Germans entered Vilna. The best proof of the magnitude of these successes is that on September 5 the Grand Duke Nicholas, hitherto generalissimo of the Russian army, was removed from his post and the Czar Nicholas II. assumed supreme command—nominally at any rate—of the Russian armies, which were everywhere in retreat.

Francis Joseph could now breathe rather more freely in his palace at Schönbrunn. Once more great days were dawning for the old monarch, and he gradually threw off his fatalistic melancholy. In his heart he cherished bright hopes for the future. The Emperor was almost unrecognizable in those days. He was very nearly jovial and everything once more came quite easily to him.

There was something else which confirmed him in his optimistic mood. On September 2 a mixed deputation of Hungarians and Croatians, headed by Count Tisza, was received in audience. It came to assure the Emperor that now all differences between the eastern and western halves of the Empire had been removed and that all the nations of that Empire had only one aim, to preserve and protect their common Fatherland. The Emperor received this deputation with quite special satisfaction.

Unfortunately the course of events showed that the assurances were but vain words, for when the shortage of food began to make itself felt Hungary was unprecedentedly selfish and practically closed her frontiers while the people of Austria suffered the pangs of starvation. This behaviour was not the least of the causes of that defeatism which led to the collapse and dissolution of the Hapsburg Empire.

The war continued. Bulgaria threw in her lot with the Central Powers after Turkey had shown a wise and diplomatic magnanimity in ceding to her on September 3, 1915, the territory she required for the completion of the railway to

her port of Dedeagatch. An offensive on a large scale against Serbia could now be mounted.

Bulgaria mobilized on September 23. On October 5 she rejected the Russian ultimatum which forbade her to join the enemies of the Slav cause, and on October 14 she declared war on Serbia, as Serbian troops had crossed the Bulgarian frontier near Küstendil and commenced hostilities.

As the Serbians had remained inactive since the end of 1914, and the Russians had suffered heavy defeats in the summer of 1915, London, Paris and St. Petersburg addressed urgent summonses to Belgrade to relieve the burden on the Russian armies by invading Hungary. The Central Powers anticipated them, however.

To save the hard-pressed Turks from a disaster at the Dardanelles, the Emperor Francis Joseph and the Emperor William decided on a decisive and immediate operation against Serbia, notwithstanding all the obstacles presented by the tremendous demands on the German and Austro-Hungarian armies in the north-east, the Monarchy's exhausting struggle with Italy and the great offensive which the English and French were then preparing in the west.

Under the supreme command of Field-Marshal von Mackensen an Austro-Hungarian army, under General von Kövess, was concentrated west and north of Belgrade, and a German under General von Gallwitz east of Semendria. The Bulgarian army, commanded by General Bodjadjieff, was to cross the Timok and press forward to join its allies, while another Bulgarian army under General Todonoff advanced through Uskub and Prisrend, and cut off the Serbians' line of retreat to Albania.

Field-Marshal von Mackensen established his headquarters in Temesvar. Before he took up his residence there he presented himself to the Emperor Francis Joseph in Vienna. He was received with every possible sign of honour, stayed at the Hofburg as the Emperor's guest, and the

Emperor gave a breakfast in his honour at Schönbrunn. The Field-Marshal made a most excellent impression upon Francis Joseph, who rose with quite unusual warmth and ended a little speech with the words:

"With such men how *can* things go wrong!"

As he uttered the words the Emperor sighed. He was probably thinking of Potiorek and others who had certainly been inspired by the best intentions, but had not been able to translate them into deeds.

I should also mention the fact that Field-Marshal von Mackensen celebrated his sixty-seventh birthday during his visit to Vienna. The Emperor took advantage of the occasion to congratulate the General before luncheon in unusually warm terms in the presence of the suite, and during the meal itself he proposed a toast in his honour after clinking glasses with him.

At this luncheon the Emperor dropped a remark which subsequently gave me much food for thought. Mackensen happened to speak about Italy's desertion of the Central Powers and remarked that up to the last moment everyone in Germany refused to believe that Italy would strike her ancient allies in the back in their hour of peril.

Francis Joseph replied in tones of resignation that perhaps Italy could not have acted otherwise, particularly after England had ranged herself on the side of France and Russia. The old sovereign went on to refer to the vital fact that Italy —a country without iron and coal and therefore dependent upon imports from foreign countries, particularly England, for these indispensable raw materials—would hardly have been able to ward off English naval attacks and raids on her long coast line. The Emperor also pointed out that General Pollio, the former Chief of the Italian General Staff and a proved supporter of the Triple Alliance, had frankly and openly said when military agreements were under discussion that Italy would only fight side by side with her allies if England

were not in the ranks of her enemies. In the latter eventuality it would be a case of *force majeure* for Italy, which she would have to recognize.

The Emperor concluded his remarks with the words:

"We must not grudge even our enemies our admiration when they deserve it. King Victor Emmanuel III. seems to me entirely worthy of it. As soon as war breaks out he hands over the conduct of all state business to Duke Thomas of Genoa and regarding himself solely as Commander-in-Chief he joins his army and never leaves it, even for a day. That is the proper thing to do. No other course is open to a sovereign in the prime of life!"

Mackensen nodded approvingly and added:

"Yes, our Emperor did the same!"

The Emperor Francis Joseph sighed deeply and said:

"If only *I* could have been with my army, too! But I'm so old, much too old! It must be left to my successor if the war lasts long enough."

I was often sorry afterwards that the Archduke Charles had not been present at this conversation. When he became Emperor he frequently visited the field army, but only for a few days at a time, and then hurried away as fast as he could to Laxenburg, Reichenau or Baden. I often heard remarkable and by no means complimentary comments in all quarters. Even the facts that in January, 1917, General Headquarters was transferred to Baden, quite near Vienna, and that the Emperor Charles went there daily from Laxenburg and subsequently settled in Baden itself with his family did not silence the voice of criticism. At the last he was associated with General Headquarters by public opinion and his removal to Baden itself contributed materially to diminish his prestige, which had already suffered very considerably.

After the overthrow of Serbia the Emperor William II., who had not seen Francis Joseph since the outbreak of war,

paid us a visit, and appeared at Schönbrunn on November 29, 1915.

The meeting, which had been awaited with interest and excitement, took a rather peculiar course. At bottom it was to some extent a disappointment. Perhaps too great hopes had been built upon it. Some of us—Count Paar for one—wanted to regard it as heralding the end of the war. Unfortunately, it had no such result.

Several days before the arrival of the German Emperor there was a certain atmosphere of uneasiness at Schönbrunn, which obviously emanated from the old Emperor himself. Francis Joseph was uncomfortable because he had a feeling that his fighting services had not quite come up to what might have been expected of them. Perhaps he was afraid of reproaches, which he would have felt the more keenly because they were certain to be fairly well-disguised before they reached his ears.

This was the first visit of the German Emperor to Vienna during the war. It was also to be his last meeting with the Emperor Francis Joseph, who had always been a father and friend to him. The Emperor William's visit to Schönbrunn was essentially a private one, and every kind of ceremony and festivity was rigorously excluded.

On this visit I only had an occasional glimpse of the German Emperor. He struck me as alert, vigorous and jovial, though he had aged remarkably.

After the small banquet given in William II.'s honour, Count Paar told me that he had found the German Emperor greatly changed. On this occasion he had not been in his element. His lively conversation, occasional outbursts of merriment and air of confidence seemed merely simulated, put on to conceal his cares and anxieties, not to say depression. In their conversation the two Emperors gave the impression of a certain off-handedness, which only gradually gave place to the old confidence. Count Paar added that the Emperor

William struck him as being certainly not quite sure of his cause, and concluded with the words :

" I'm absolutely certain that the German Emperor personally, like our own, is anxious to bring the war to an end, and the sooner the better. I may be wrong, but I can't resist some such feeling."

This characteristic conclusion of Count Paar was certainly not based on what he casually saw and heard, but represented the result of close and continuous observation during the German Emperor's last visit to Schönbrunn.

Count Paar had also sounded the members of William II.'s suite as to whether it would not be advisable to come forward with proposals for a just peace by understanding, in view of the unexpectedly favourable military situation. They angrily rejected all such ideas, and said that Falkenhayn, then Chief of the General Staff of the German Field Army, had more great and amazing things in store.

Hence the two sides to the German Emperor's attitude. He was obviously longing for a speedy peace, yet could not trust himself to use his personal authority in that direction, as the influence of the General Staff was too great and, in fact, omnipotent in many quarters. Both Emperors already realized that things were not really well with us, notwithstanding all our victories, and that view was gaining ground among non-soldiers, while many generals absolutely refused to see that even Napoleon " conquered himself to death."

Thus no peace resulted. Neither of the two Emperors dared call the other's attention to the imminent necessity of bringing the war to an end for fear of being regarded as pessimistic. That was particularly true of the Emperor Francis Joseph.

Be that as it may, the Christmas of 1915 was a far brighter affair than that of the preceding year. The Emperor had once more gathered his family around him, and now felt happier, even at Schönbrunn. There had been an idea

of persuading him to get a little change from his monotonous life by returning to his old practice of spending the Christmas holidays at Wallsee with the Archduchess Marie Valerie and the Archduke Franz Salvator. Dr. von Kerzl, the Imperial physician, considered it particularly necessary as the Emperor was overburdened with work all day at Schönbrunn, and it seemed quite impossible for him to have quiet intervals, however badly he needed them. A further reason for the eagerness to get him away from Schönbrunn for several days was the necessity for doing some decorating in his apartments, which were no longer all that they ought to be after uninterrupted use for a year and a half. But the old Emperor would not hear of a holiday. He was quite angry, and replied to what was only a well-meant suggestion with the words:

"Who ever heard of a holiday in such serious times, when I'm faced with the most important decisions from hour to hour! I should lose my self-respect if I entertained the idea of leaving everything unattended here for the sake of my own pleasure."

The Emperor therefore remained at Schönbrunn, which, in view of his advanced age, was very bad for his already delicate health. Further, his apartments were on the northern front of Schönbrunn Palace, and almost always in shadow, so that in the cold season particularly they were anything but a healthy place of residence.

From Serbia General von Kövess and his army penetrated into Montenegro. On January 10, 1916, several units of this army, supported by the Austro-Hungarian fleet, stormed Mount Lovćen, which rises 1,700 metres straight out of the sea and commands the Bay of Cattaro. On January 17 the Emperor's troops entered Cettinje. In a personal letter to Francis Joseph, King Nicholas, fleeing to France, asked for peace. His son Mirko offered to capitulate unconditionally, and the Montenegrin forces laid down their arms.

But all the good news from the front could not banish the deep depression which, exactly on New Year's Day, 1916 (curiously enough), succeeded the Emperor's more cheerful mood of the previous months. We were extremely surprised, particularly when the old sovereign merely replied to King Nicholas' request for peace with the words :

"Another old man! His fate fills me with genuine regret. *Hodie mihi, cras tibi.*"

The Emperor was also exceedingly sorry that notwithstanding the swift success of the Balkan campaign Salonica had not been reached, and in all probability never would be reached. He personally regarded the capture of Salonica and its harbour—a sea-gate of the greatest importance to the Central Powers who were completely isolated—as the test of success in the operations which had begun so well in the south-east.

It may be that this feeling was also inspired by a consideration which had weighed with the Emperor ever since 1878. He frankly confessed that unless Salonica was in the possession of his own and his allies' armies the overrunning of Serbia, Montenegro and Albania would remain a highly problematical gain.

"A rapid advance of an enemy from Salonica would easily make it fruitless," he said. "We must always be on the watch for some such operation by our opponents. Quite probably it will come at the very moment when we are attacked simultaneously on all our fronts. In such a case it might prove fatal to us!"

The Emperor never shook off that tormenting notion. Did he suspect in the last months of his life that—as actually happened in 1918—the death-blow to the Monarchy would be delivered from Salonica?

A few weeks afterwards the latest Austro-Hungarian Field-Marshal, the Tsar Ferdinand of Bulgaria, appeared in Vienna, and had several long conversations with the

Emperor. Both rulers were determined to pave the way for peace, but for the time being Germany would hear nothing of it as the great offensive against Verdun had begun, and decisive results were expected of it, even in the political field.

With that before his eyes, General Conrad was not going to be behind in attempting a great blow on his own. Of course it could only be against Italy. For this operation, which was to start from the Tyrol and had been Conrad's dream for decades, not only infantry, but artillery, particularly heavy artillery, was withdrawn from the eastern front and sent south. In the course of this movement the 1st Regiment of Tyrolese Kaiserjäger passed through Vienna, and the Emperor, who was also an officer of that unit, reviewed it in the park at Schönbrunn. He then gathered the officers round him, thanked them for their splendid deeds in battle, and sent them off with his heartfelt wishes for their future success.

General von Conrad had the realization of a private plan at heart as well as that of his military plans. I only mention it here because it cost the Emperor many unpleasant hours. In February, 1916, Conrad's mother died. The general had been a widower for very many years, and shortly afterwards he asked the Emperor's consent to his second marriage. To a man like the Emperor, who shared the prejudices of former days, such a scheme, at so short an interval, did not appeal. He thought it particularly inappropriate that the Chief of the General Staff should be busying himself with private matters at the very crisis of the war. It was only after insistent intervention by the Chief of the Military Cabinet that the sovereign's opposition was overcome. This dispute hardly contributed to strengthen Conrad's reputation with the Emperor, and everywhere people began to say that his retirement was imminent. Officers in immediate touch with the Commander-in-Chief, the Archduke Frederick, suggested that before long we might have to deal

with a new Chief of the General Staff. Even the names of the candidates for the post were given : Generals Boroevíc, Blasius Schemua and Alfred Krauss.

Matters turned out otherwise. It certainly amazed me to note how swiftly Conrad's marriage utterly undermined his popularity with the public. At the beginning he had been one of the favourite Austro-Hungarian military leaders. Great hopes had been set upon him, and his work commanded genuine confidence. That was all over now, particularly when it was known that his wife had accompanied him to General Headquarters, and there become a centre of social attractions. The stream of adverse criticism, among both officers and civilians, of conditions at Headquarters could no longer be dammed, and it did the greatest harm to the supreme command, whose reputation, in any case, was not too secure.

These criticisms gradually went so far that one day the Deputy Chief of the Military Cabinet, Lieutenant-General von Marterer drafted a memorandum for the Emperor's signature, addressed to Field-Marshal the Archduke Frederick, and requiring him to do everything in his power to remedy the abuses at General Headquarters, which were exciting public opinion. After careful consideration General Bolfras decided not to lay the document before the Emperor, but forwarded it, with the necessary comments, straight to the Chief of the General Staff. He did not want to bother the Emperor in such unpleasant matters. Of course, it meant that the effect was lost from the start.

As General von Bolfras had rightly anticipated from the beginning, Conrad's projected offensive from the eastern frontier of Tyrol in March came to nothing, mainly owing to the bad weather in the mountains. The Italians retaliated in the middle of March with their fifth great offensive against the Isonzo front. It failed, like the others.

It was not before May 15 that Conrad's attack from the

mountains of Tyrol could begin. In the first fortnight it produced local successes in which the 20th Corps, under the command of the Archduke Charles, played a glorious part. At the beginning of June, however, the operation had suddenly to be broken off, as General Brussiloff, who had been appointed the Russian Commander-in-Chief, took the offensive on the Styr and Strypa on a broad front with huge masses of troops he had collected in the winter and spring and equipped with American and Japanese war material. The army of the Archduke Joseph Ferdinand was driven west of Dubno and Luck with enormous losses. It is true that the German Generals Bothmer and Linsingen held their positions after a furious struggle, but the Austro-Hungarian troops continued to be driven back in disorder and gave way in the Bukowina also, so that the Russians recaptured Czernowitz and even Kolomea. The demoralization which once more spread through the Austro-Hungarian army was terrible.

The armies on the eastern front were immediately regrouped. Hindenburg took command from the Baltic to Tarnopol, where he joined hands with the Archduke Charles, who had been hastily recalled from the Tyrol and given the command of a longer front. The change was not greatly for the better, as the Russians pressed on relentlessly, took Stanislau and Delatyn and could not be brought to a standstill until they reached the Carpathians.

The defeats on the battlefield in the north-east brought the Emperor to the verge of despair, even though he had always feared that the situation might develop as it did.

If he had not been so impersonal a sovereign for so long he could have simply used his own authority to forbid Conrad's attack on Italy, particularly as both the Archduke Eugene and General Boroevíc, the tried and trusted defender of the Isonzo front, had vehemently protested against it and

given sound and urgent reasons for their views. The commanders on the north-eastern front, including the Archduke Joseph Ferdinand, had also objected to the transfer of troops and artillery to the Tyrol, pointing out that the Russians were concentrating enormous forces and that an attack was to be expected, the date of which could not be foretold.

Conrad's standing reply to these protests was that Italy would be decisively beaten before the Russians were ready, so that the reinforcements required to hold the north-eastern front could be on the spot in time. His calculations would have proved accurate, perhaps, if the Tyrol offensive had begun in March as Conrad had intended in his original scheme. As that proved impossible—for very practical and obvious reasons—and the offensive against Italy only began two months later, the whole calculation was a farce, and led to that disaster which possibly robbed the Central Powers of their chances once and for all.

The old game of 1914 was played over again. In that year it was a question of beating Serbia first and then transferring the troops thus released to meet the Russians. In 1914 the Austro-Hungarian forces were beaten both by the Serbians and the Russians. It was just the same in 1916. The Emperor often said to Count Paar about this time :

" I don't understand this strategy ; it's too complicated for me. And it's poor consolation to see that it isn't even successful ! "

Of course it was not strategy at all, but simply tactics ! Conrad was too fond of applying purely tactical principles and judging them by strategical standards. His calculations went wrong once more. They were too bold because they did not allow for any margin of safety.

A remark of Montenuovo's on this point contains a considerable measure of truth. He thought that the operations against Italy and Russia had failed because Conrad started from the assumption that nothing would happen on the

eastern front during the spring of 1916. This promise turned out to be false. According to Montenuovo, it should have been Conrad's first duty, before he made any plans, to satisfy himself of the real condition of affairs. "He ought to have gone to the eastern front himself and got into personal touch with all the commanders there. If he'd done so he'd have seen that it was directly threatened," said Prince Montenuovo, hitting the nail straight on the head.

Once more the political consequences of our military reverses were revealed with amazing speed. For some time the new King of Rumania, Ferdinand, and still more his influential wife, Marie, had made no secret of their sympathies for Russia and England, while the Rumanian *intelligentsia* had always looked to France as their ideal. It was thus hardly surprising that we had not long to wait for Rumania's declaration of war.

The threatening military peril made it essential to take military measures against Rumania, and one of the more obvious ones was an attack by Bulgaria, with whom Rumania had a long, common frontier. When it came to making the appropriate arrangements and agreements the Bulgarian Generals declared categorically that under no circumstances would Bulgarian troops be placed under Austro-Hungarian commanders. Appealing ruthlessly to the facts, the reason they assigned for their refusal was that our leadership had been discredited by the experience of the world war, and particularly the events of the spring and summer of 1916.

As I have said before, the Emperor Francis Joseph himself had from the outset had little confidence in his army commanders, and still less in the supreme command, whose, in many respects, slipshod work had been anything but to his taste, particularly in recent months. Yet this curt refusal of Bulgaria was a terrible grief to the old sovereign. He had grown up with his army from his earliest years, and he regarded a slight upon it as nothing but an insult to his

own person. He remarked to Count Paar: "The Bulgarians are right, only too right, unfortunately. But it cuts me to the heart that it should be so. I reproach myself bitterly now for not having put my northern army, too, under German command last year. I frequently heard that even my officers would have liked nothing better."

Although the Emperor was not too well-disposed towards the Chief of the General Staff at this time Conrad succeeded once more in preventing the proposal of a single command in German hands from taking a final and concrete shape, although the Emperor himself had desired the change since 1914.

At the beginning of July, 1916, a terrible tornado had suddenly struck Wiener-Neustadt and done an enormous amount of damage, particularly to military establishments.

At the first news the Emperor gave me orders first thing next morning to go and see for myself what had happened and bring him back a full report. When I returned the same evening from Wiener-Neustadt I reported myself at once to him.

The Emperor looked terribly pale, careworn and downcast. He told me to sit down by his desk and listened to my detailed account of the occurrence with his usual patience. When we had finished discussing it he began to speak of the general situation and the enormous problems facing the Danube Monarchy. He obviously found it a relief to speak his mind. As he ended he folded his hands and said slowly:

"Things are going badly with us, perhaps worse than we suspect. The starving people can't stand much more. *It remains to be seen whether and how we shall get through the winter. I mean to end the war next spring whatever happens. I can't let my Empire go to hopeless ruin!*"

When I told Count Paar what the Emperor had said he gave me another special reason why the old monarch wanted to end the war at any cost in the spring of 1917. The Em-

peror foresaw that the intensified submarine warfare on which Germany was bent would sooner or later drive the United States of America into the arms of our enemies. He was extremely anxious to anticipate that eventuality, for he considered that there would be no chance of even a tolerable peace unless the North American Union, a fairly unbiassed one, anyhow the last great neutral, conducted the negotiations as she had done eleven years before on the occasion of the conclusion of hostilities between Russia and Japan, when both parties had been satisfied.

A few days later Frau Schratt told me that the Emperor had frequently spoken to her in the same sense and almost in the same words. He was now absolutely determined to bring peace, cost what it might.

Subsequently, I often heard it said that the Emperor Francis Joseph had lived and reigned too long. That opinion seems to me unsound from every point of view. Indeed, as things are now, the old Emperor unquestionably died too soon. If he had only lived a few months longer he would surely have brought the ancient monarchy safe and sound out of the war, at any rate so far as that was possible. I cannot wrench myself free from that heartfelt conviction. At the present time it is undoubtedly shared by many who knew the Emperor intimately.

Thus, on the Emperor's eighty-sixth birthday, on August 18, all of us were a prey to the gloomiest forebodings. Early in the morning a solemn mass was celebrated in the chapel at Schönbrunn. It was the last in honour of the revered old monarch. In company with the Chief of the Military Cabinet I was present at the great luncheon held at the Ministry of War. The note of tormenting apprehension sounded even in the toast in which the War Minister, General Baron von Krobatin, proposed the sovereign's health. All those present joined enthusiastically in the toast, and when

the band struck up "Gott erhalte," "Heil dir im Siegeskranz," "Schumi Maritza," and the Turkish National Anthem in turn, General Krobatin remarked with a bittersweet smile:

"If our enemies celebrated occasions of this kind, and *their* band had to play the National Anthems of all *their* allies, it would take them more than an hour to get through."

It was a delicate but obvious reference to the extremely difficult situation in which the Central Powers found themselves.

It was to become even more difficult. The defeats of Okna, Luck and Dubno produced that overwhelming political result in Bucharest which had been expected as much in London, Paris and Rome as in St. Petersburg.

On August 27 Rumania declared war on Austria-Hungary. To increase the effect of this step the formal declaration of war on Germany by Italy was issued the same day. It had been reserved hitherto. Rumania's behaviour really surprised no one in Vienna. It had been contemplated ever since the death of King Charles.

In Hungary the immediate irruption of the Rumanians into eastern Transylvania and their occupation of Hermannstadt and Cronstadt produced an angry outburst both against the Government and the General Staff, which had made no kind of preparation to meet the Rumanian invasion. In the Hungarian Parliament the popular fury against the Minister-President Count Tisza and General von Conrad found overwhelming expression. It was at once only too obvious how little sympathy or respect both the Government and the military leaders commanded. Count Paar put the *vox populi* into words, though they certainly went too far:

"It was silly of Bolfras to keep on the Chief of the General Staff. If he'd been let go in February on the ground of his marriage we'd have been spared the scenes of the last few days, and quite possibly we'd even have had peace by now."

Thanks to the brilliant leadership of Falkenhayn, the allies soon succeeded in clearing Hungary and overthrowing Rumania. This glorious campaign, a triumphal march almost unparalleled, forms one of the most splendid pages in the history of the Central Powers.

The Emperor followed the first phase of the operations with merely fatalistic resignation to the will of God. The burden he had taken on aged shoulders on June 28, 1914, and borne with rare courage, was proving itself too heavy for the sorely-tried old man. To all the disappointments, apprehensions and reverses which the year 1916 had brought us was now added the haunting fear that the daily increasing embitterment of the starving population might break all bounds in one primeval upheaval and reduce all the efforts of our gallant army to nought.

The cry for Parliament to be summoned became louder and louder, and, as the Council of Ministers continued to disregard it, popular indignation turned against the Minister-President Count Stürgkh, who was shot by Dr. Friedrich Adler, subsequently leader of the Social Democrats. The news of this crime made an utterly devastating impression on the Emperor. He was firmly convinced that to all the misfortunes brought on us by our external enemies was now to be added that of internal revolution. He feverishly held conferences with the most eminent Austrian statesmen with a view to finding a means of averting the peril, and on all these occasions made the absolute necessity of immediately convening the Austrian chambers the first plank in the platform. On November 5 the Emperor appointed the joint Finance Minister, Dr. Ernst von Koerber, to be the Austrian Minister-President. The new minister made it his principal task to revive constitutional government in Austria. He was a gifted and outstandingly able politician and official, unquestionably the best man to undertake this formidable mission, particularly as he had once before been

Austrian Minister-President (1900 to 1904) and could thus bring practical experience to his work.

On November 5, the day of von Koerber's appointment as Minister-President of the western half of the empire, it was solemnly proclaimed by the Military Governors in Warsaw and Lublin that Poland was to be established as a hereditary constitutional monarchy, in close association with Germany and Austria-Hungary. The Emperor Francis Joseph and William II. had decided on this step—mainly under pressure from the military leaders—with a view to inducing the Poles to take a more active part in the war, especially in the way of supplying recruits.

Events were to show that this proclamation was not only a fatal aberration, but, in fact, one of the most serious political errors. It had no results of any value to the Central Powers and produced disastrous consequences, because it utterly destroyed any chance of a future understanding with Russia. In addition it had a disruptive influence on the internal situation of Austria, owing to the position of Galicia. At the moment when the Central Powers were offering to restore Poland, they ought logically to have conceded the incorporation in the new state of all the regions with a Polish population which belonged to it. That they would not do, so the newly created Poland remained nothing but a torso. All they did was to create a new *irredenta* in neighbouring territories.

As a matter of fact, the proclamation—like many other things which originated in the initiative of the military leaders of Germany and Austria-Hungary during the world war—was simply a phrase, and even the blast of trumpets that accompanied it could deceive no one as to its essential hollowness. From both points of view it would have been better not to have issued it.

The old monarch now played no more than a wholly passive, even mechanical part. His energies were already

declining. His inward anguish and the extreme strain on his mental powers during the summer of 1916 had at length broken down his physical strength.

In the last days of October the Emperor had an obstinate attack of bronchial catarrh. It was soon accompanied by an intermittent fever which pointed to an insidious inflammation of the lungs. Simultaneously he began to show an increasingly serious loss of appetite which gradually produced alarming signs of physical exhaustion. Dr. von Kerzl, his physician, did what was humanly possible to cure, or at any rate check these symptoms, which were becoming dangerous in view of the Emperor's advanced age. But this time he had no success.

Unwilling to trust to his own skill alone any longer, Dr. Kerzl called in the celebrated physician and University professor, Hofrat Dr. Ortner. They treated the Emperor in conjunction, but unhappily without result. He became worse every day. Our hopes for his recovery began to sink, and on November 10, on Count Paar's initiative, the first preparations were made for the melancholy eventuality of his death.

An apparent slight improvement in the Emperor's health lasted but a few days. Then the fever set in again, and more violently, and his strength now rapidly declined. Yet he worked untiringly at his table from early morning to late at night as usual. He received his ministers and advisers in conference and dispatched state business with his wonted care. His triumph over himself won the admiration of everyone. It seemed as if with the Emperor his amazing sense of duty found his struggle with his sufferings a positive cure.

At this time the aides-de-camp's office at Schönbrunn was a hushed and melancholy place. Its frequenters exchanged but few remarks and those in low tones. As a rule a silence brooded over the room which had once resounded with many a lively discussion. Occasionally our eyes would

meet in a dumb look of inquiry : " What will happen if our old Emperor leaves us ? "

That was an evil and gloomy time. It was to grow yet worse.

On Monday, November 20, after a very bad and sleepless night in which he had been sorely tormented by a wracking cough, the Emperor was once more at his desk, but the night had so exhausted him that he could hardly breathe and was terribly shaken by his growing fever.

He asked for confession, which was celebrated by his chaplain, Dr. Seydl. Reconciled with his Maker and thereby spiritually regenerated, the Emperor once more set resolutely to work, though the Angel of Death was already hovering above him.

His daughters and Princess Elizabeth Windisch-Grätz and the Archduke Charles were speedily sent for, for his condition excited great apprehension. By the next day it had become extremely serious.

Yet the old Emperor worked on uninterruptedly at his desk.

He dealt with the morning reports, files, and even the papers sent him in the usual two-o'clock portfolio. He even tried to collect the papers for the five o'clock portfolio . . . but the end had been reached.

From my office at the Hofburg I rang up Schönbrunn towards five o'clock to ask how the Emperor was. The gentleman-in-waiting on duty simply answered that I must not expect the five o'clock portfolio that day.

Thereupon I rushed off to Schönbrunn, fetched Count Paar, who had completely broken down, from his apartment in the Meidling corridor, and we went down to the aides-de-camp's office together. Prince Montenuovo and two of the aides-de-camp were already there. From time to time Dr. Kerzl and Dr. Ortner looked in. Their reports became worse and worse.

About seven o'clock the Archduke Charles appeared. He was in the uniform of a general with all his decorations, and cast an aimless glance at us all. It was obvious from his appearance that he was very agitated. He did not say much, but waited in tense anxiety for the doctors' reports.

In the evening I had to go back to the Hofburg to finish some very urgent work, but at half-past eight I returned to Schönbrunn with Baron von Bolfras. In the ante-chamber to the Emperor's apartments I met Dr. Ortner and asked him breathlessly whether the Emperor's inflammation of the lungs had passed the crisis.

"Crisis!" replied Ortner. "It's the end. Hardly an hour now!"

At five minutes past nine the Emperor Francis Joseph was dead.

The Emperor's family and a large number of court functionaries were gradually collecting in the chamber of death when I said a silent farewell prayer to my sovereign, whom my grandfather, my father and I myself had served in turn. We could hear the new arrivals conversing in the Emperor's cabinet adjoining, but in the bedroom of the dead Emperor, with its simple, not to say spartan, appointments, a hushed and reverent peace reigned.

Awed by the majesty of death, I let fall the sheet which covered the Emperor's face, and went out through the cabinet in which the new Emperor Charles was talking to several Archdukes and Archduchesses. He was now wearing the uniform of an admiral of the fleet. Only two hours before I had seen him in that of a full general.

The following morning I presented myself with my morning report at Schönbrunn as usual. When I entered the office Count Paar was not there. There was to be no morning report either. Everything had changed . . . for the Emperor Francis Joseph was absent! I hurried to Count Paar's apartments. The old general was sitting, pale and

careworn, at his bureau. Our eyes met. We could not speak. Then he took my hand.

"You've still most of your life before you, but I died yesterday evening, too!"

The aged officer's declaration of loyalty was neither pose nor a phrase, but the solemn truth!

Count Paar took part in all the funeral ceremonies of the Emperor Francis Joseph. He could hardly stand up, but he paid his dead master the last honours. He was also present at the solemn mass for the dead on December 2, but in the afternoon of that day he had an apoplectic fit.

The deathless loyalty of this tried and trusted servant will always be to me, and all who knew him, an inspiring example of a noble and shining soul.

At first Francis Joseph's body lay on a simple bier in the smaller of his two cabinets in the palace at Schönbrunn. A small altar was set up in the same room, and during the week masses were said for the soul of the departed ruler. The rooms were also thrown open to the public, and people came to Schönbrunn in an unending stream for hours at a time to bid farewell to the dead Emperor.

Five days after his death, the Emperor's body was transferred in solemn procession to the Hofburg by night, in accordance with traditional ceremonial. There it was laid on the magnificent state bier in the chapel. There, in a sea of light and glorious wreaths, Francis Joseph, in the full-dress uniform of a field-marshal with all his decorations and orders, lay until the morning of November 30. Here again an immense number of people filed by to see their revered old Emperor once more before he passed to his last resting-place among his forefathers. In death, even more than in life, it was seen how enormously popular Francis Joseph had been.

In the early afternoon of November 30, 1916, the Emperor's coffin was closed and placed with the prescribed ceremonial on the magnificent black funeral car.

The carriages containing the personnel of the dead monarch's court and a carriage with the wreaths preceded the funeral car. Life Guards provided the escort. An infantry battalion was drawn up at the outer Burgtor. There were no other troops in Vienna at the time. There could be no military splendour, for the Emperor's soldiers were fighting on many fronts against superior enemies. Out there from the guns and rifles of the Austro-Hungarian armies thundered a " Last Post " for the dead Emperor !

From the outer Burgtor the funeral procession turned into Ringstrasse, passed the Opera House, the Schwarzenbergplatz and the Ministry of War, crossed the Franz Joseph-Kai and went up the Rotenturmstrasse to the metropolitan church of St. Stephen. Here all the mourners were assembled and the dead Emperor was solemnly blessed by the Prince Bishop of Vienna, Cardinal Piffe.

Then the coffin was again placed on the funeral car and the procession completed the last part of its journey across Kärntnerstrasse and the Neuer Markt to the Church of the Capucins, in the crypt of which Francis Joseph was to be buried.

During this short stretch the dead monarch's coffin was followed by the Emperor Charles and his wife, the Empress Zita, and their eldest son, the Crown Prince Otto, the Kings of Bavaria and Saxony, Tsar Ferdinand of Bulgaria, the German Crown Prince, and the other royal mourners and representatives, all on foot. An enormous crowd had assembled on the Bürgersteige in Kärntnerstrasse, and there were people in all the windows and even on the roofs of the houses.

After a short blessing in the Church of the Capucins the coffin was borne down to the crypt and laid next to those of the Empress Elizabeth and Crown Prince Rudolph. The old Emperor was at rest with his nearest and dearest.

On December 2nd, the sixty-eighth anniversary of his

accession, a solemn mass for the dead was said in the chapel of the Hofburg. The young Emperor and Empress, the members of the royal family and all the highest military and civil authorities were present. With that service ended the funeral ceremonies of the dead Emperor and King Francis Joseph I. Before many weeks, indeed, before many days, he was forgotten, utterly forgotten amid the stormy and anxious days of the world war which swept pitilessly over the living and so many other dead.

To the dead Emperor any kind of obsequiousness or angling for popularity was so fundamentally and inherently repugnant that it would be nothing short of an impiety to brush away that image of solitary and selfless impersonality which the Emperor gave us by ending my book with a panegyry. I think I can best close these memories as my dead sovereign would have me close them if, in his name and spirit, I recall the opening words of Christina Rossetti's immortal poem:

When I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me;
Plant thou no roses at my head,
Nor shady cypress tree.
Be the green grass above me
With showers and dewdrops wet,
And if thou wilt, remember,
And if thou wilt, forget!

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